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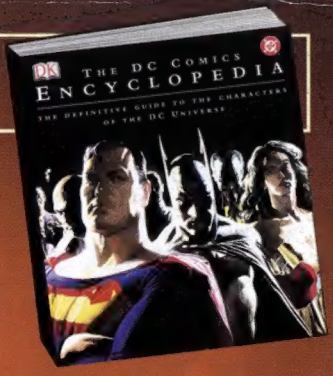

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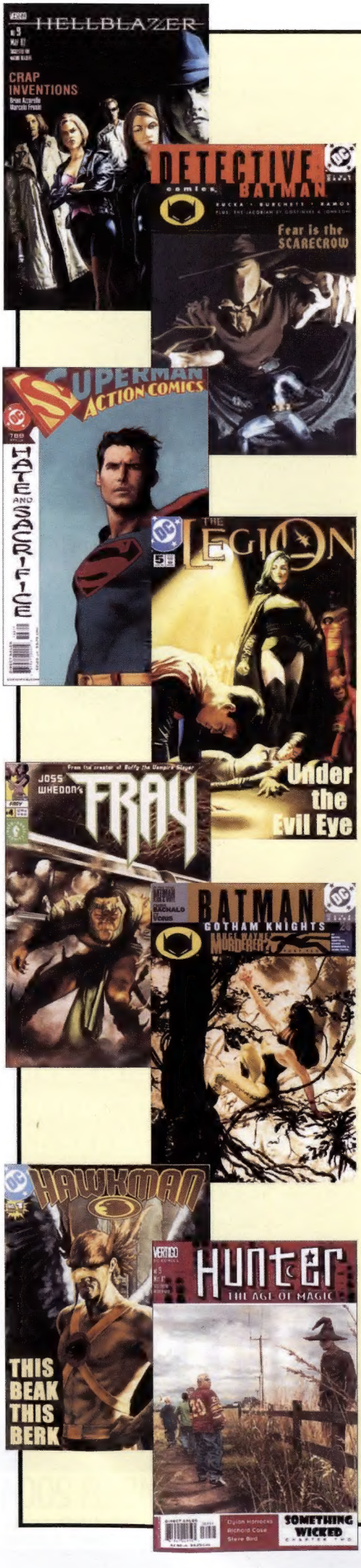

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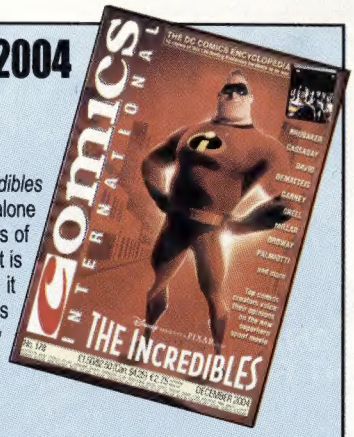
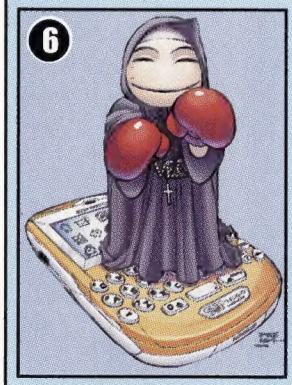


Inside this issue

COVER: We just couldn't resist it an *Incredibles* cover. The belt-buckling slapstick trailer alone has had entire cinema audiences in hoots of laughter – a sight not seen in in ages. But is the movie actually good for the industry it parodies? We asked a team of comics experts for their opinions. What did they say? Turn to page 14 to find out.

News



NEWS INTERNATIONAL: Marvel invites influential war correspondent to write Iraq War mini... Joe Casey and Jim Lee unveil WildStorm's newest superhero teens... Warren Ellis launches imaginary line with four one-shots... *Constantine* movie prompts **Hellblazer** graphic novel... **Thunderbolts** writers develop new team for new title... Peter Bagge moves to Dark Horse... **Jack Staff** creator lets **Burglar Bill** into Image... UK indie publisher launches manga line... **Ultimate Spider-Man** inker goes solo with Image graphic novel... **American Splendor** creator signs with Vertigo... plus much more **5**
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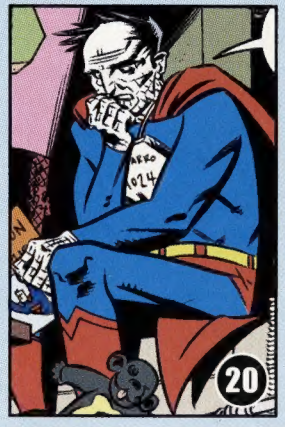

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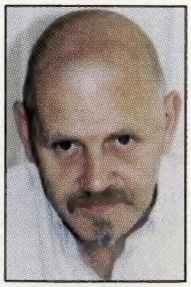
Sez Dez



Editorial
Dez Skinn

CHEZ Dez is rapidly turning into a regular fun weekend venue. As will be no surprise to existing dads, the catalyst of fatherhood opens up a whole new social world.

Through Alice's nursery, I've become close friends with an incredibly disparate group of fellow fathers and, with the mums' full approval, we have regular pubbing and clubbing Dads' Nights. Naturally, the mums allow us this indulgence simply because they cram more Mums' Nights into the month than we could dream of.

Our own merry band covers a range of professions, from property development to restaurant management, software technology to project finance. But I don't envy any of them. I've chosen comics as my lifelong passion (with only the occasional divergence) and love that I can combine my hobby with my career.

I guess the dad who comes nearest has to be Tim 2 (never did ask what Tim 1 does). A self-made man, his company flies groups of people from A to B. Groups such as the England football team.

Tim 2 and his family came over to Chez Dez for lunch last Sunday and, as the usual guided tour took place, he and I ended up at the top of the house in our third floor office. As usually happens, Tim 2 was amazed by the colourful world we work in. Everybody knows about comics but nobody ever thinks who on earth is involved in such a bizarre industry.

Following my 25c tour 'n' talk, he asked a question never before put to me: how do I manage to remain so enthusiastic about comics, given my age and that I've been doing this for so many years?

I replied saying that on age, I make a point of surrounding myself with a team of much younger people. While Gary, Steve and Tim are into their 30s and fans, neither Loriann nor Carlie have made it to their mid-20s and both have a healthy outside-looking-in point of view. This hopefully curbs fanboy excesses and makes the magazine readable to outsiders, while recognising trends aimed at people far younger than 53.

Maintaining enthusiasm? That was easy. A week doesn't pass without me discovering something new that I want to share with everybody. Whatever else, despite gainsayers, comics are not in a rut, the market is not shrinking.

As I once publicly chastised Todd McFarlane about at a Chicago convention, it's not to do with pushing the envelope a bit at a time, it's about reinvention. Cinema was saved when it created multiplexes in the face of video competition.

In comics, the new formats, new styles, new influences and new outlets present a challenge we can all rise to.

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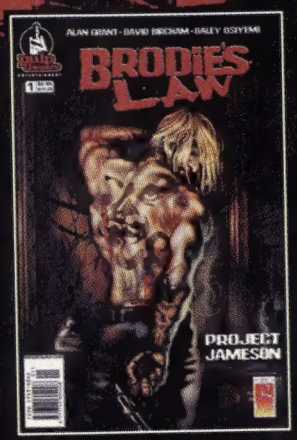

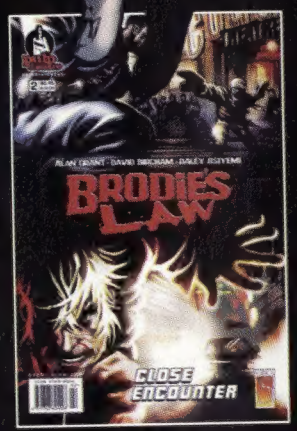

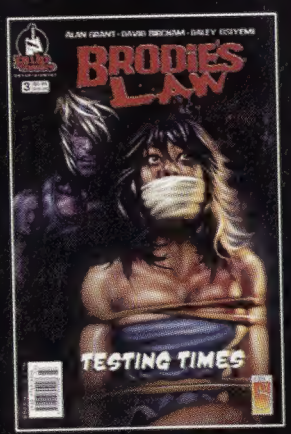

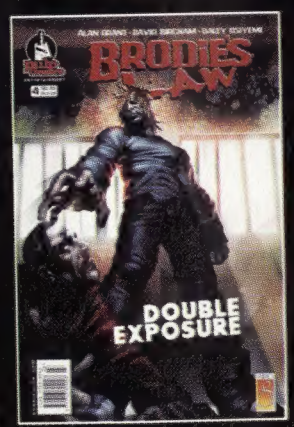

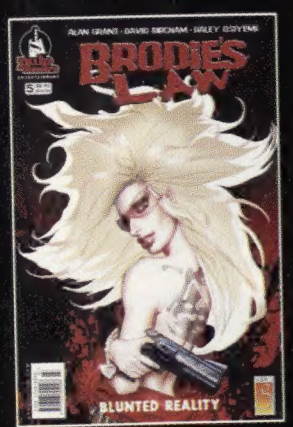

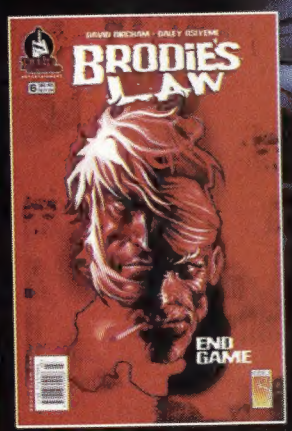

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Boots on the Ground author takes Marvel to war in Iraq

Above: Esad Ribic's art for the cover to the first issue of ***Combat Zone: True Tales of GIs in Iraq****. The $2.99 Marvel five-parter premieres on January 5.*

War correspondent's **Combat Zone** *five-parter gets up close and personal to provide realistic look at conflict*

MUCH as the Vietnam War polarised the nation in the 1970s, so is US involvement in Iraq now dividing the American people. But it is this controversial contemporary arena that is to be the focus of the first title in a line of non-fiction comics from Marvel.

Drawn by *The Death of Superman* mastermind, Dan Jurgens, **Combat Zone: True Tales of GIs in Iraq** is written by Karl Zinsmeister. A respected political observer and war correspondent, he spent the four months prior to the fall of Saddam Hussein in Iraq with the US army.

Kanigher/Kubert

Chosen to spearhead the project because of his background in journalism, editor Axel Alonso told **CI** he only agreed to work on the series if it could be kept apolitical. "One of the luxuries combat comics have had in the past is that they are normally reflecting on a war that's in your rear-view mirror. We're commenting on something that's just happened and, in fact, is still happening."

Alonso added that, once an unbiased goal had been agreed, he set out to "put together a comicbook that had the same kind of feeling as many of the Robert Kanigher/Joe Kubert war comics of the '70s but within a contemporary setting.

"This would be different from **The 'Nam** *[see below]* because it would be a factual account," he explained.

His search for someone to produce a realistic view of the conflict led Alonso to Zinsmeister, the author of **Boots on the Ground: A Month with the 82nd Airborne in the Battle for Iraq**. "Karl has an opinion about the war, as do we all, but he understands that this project is not about the war, it's not about whether we should have been there, whether it was right, it's not about failed diplomacy or – conversely – the necessity to take out Saddam. **Combat Zone** is just simply about what it felt like to be an American soldier in Iraq in the days following the fall of Saddam."

No Sgt Rock

"Karl is uniquely qualified to write from experience," Alonso continued. "What distinguishes this book is the fact that everything you read is based on real life. It is Karl reporting on the war.

"There are no scenes with Sgt Rock stuffing a grenade into a tank... rousing cheer," Alonso concluded.

Eight-year story of soldiers in Vietnam

SAIGON fell in 1975 and America began to examine the legacy of the Vietnam War a few years later with *The Deer Hunter* [1978] and *Apocalypse Now* [1979] among the first movies to explore the theme. Across the next decade came more such films, among them *Platoon* [1986], *Full Metal Jacket* and *Gardens of Stone* [1987] and *Born on the Fourth of July* [1989].

Their involvement in that Far East conflict still resonates with the American people today – who see echoes of it in the Iraq War – but, in 1986, two comics creators chose their own way to highlight how the Vietnam War affected those men who fought it.

Real time conflict

Although the conflict had killed off demand for war comics, writer Doug Murray – a Vietnam veteran – and then-fan favourite artist Michael (**Micronauts**) Golden got together to launch a Marvel series *[see first issue cover, right]* which would examine the Vietnam War in real time with each issue's story taking place about one month after the previous one.

A fictionalised account of the war, **The 'Nam** was intended to last 11 years – as long as America's involvement – but was cancelled with #84 after seven.

Murray quit after #51 when Marvel decided that a reality-based comic did not fit in with its plans. **The 'Nam** was subsumed into the Marvel Universe with a pre-Punisher Frank Castle making his first appearance in the title in #52. By then the chronological timescale and the series' focus on a single troop had also been dropped but the title struggled on for another three years.

● A reprint title, **The 'Nam Magazine**, was launched in 1988. It lasted 10 issues.

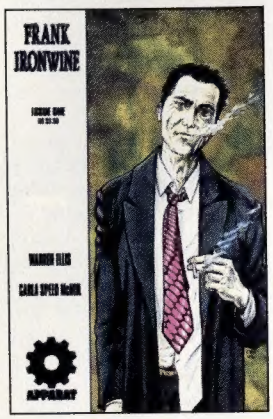
Avatar launches imaginary Ellis line

EVER-inventive, Warren Ellis is again looking to challenge the status quo.

However, rather than refusing to be bound by what others see as good taste or trampling over long-established guidelines as in the past, the iconoclastic English writer is making an assault on traditional concepts with his latest project.

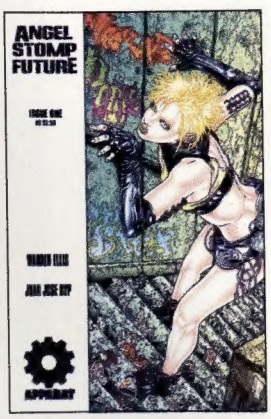
In partnership with Avatar Press, Ellis – who co-created **The Authority** – has set up *Apparat Singles Group*, described as an imaginary label. Under this 'non-existent' imprint he intended to release what he says are a group of imaginary first issues of imaginary series from an imaginary line of comics in an imaginary fifth week.

That Ellis, whose credits include **Transmetropolitan** as well as **Planetary** and **Global Frequency** – plans to release these one-shots in mid-November rather than during any real fifth week is, he says, down to the next such window being at the end of December, "which is just a dead zone. No-one's got any money. I'd be taking the piss if I put it there. So the plan changed a little."



Pictured from top to bottom are the covers to Warren Ellis's four

$3.50 Apparat *one-shots:* ***Frank Ironwine*** *(art by Carla Speed*



McNeil); ***Quit City*** *(Laurenn McCubbin);* ***Simon Spector*** *(Jacen Burrows) and* ***Angel Stomp Future*** *(Juan Jose Ryp).*

Weird Thrillers

According to the writer, Alan Moore's *America's Best Comics* are an example of what he is trying to achieve with *Apparat.* They are, he says, what adventure comics might look like today if superhero comics had not happened. "If, in fact, the pulp tradition of *Weird Thrillers* had jumped straight into comics form without mutating into the superhero subgenre we know today."

Ellis also cites DC's Dan Jurgens-spearheaded line of *Tangent* titles as another precedent. These one-shots, he suggested, were what the regular 32-page adventure comics monthly would look like if one took away pre-conceptions about design and the dominant single form.

Ellis describes *Apparat*'s **Stomp Future** as an SF pulp and **Frank Ironwine** as in the vein of the crime pulps. **Quit City**, he says, stars a classic pulp heroine while **Simon Spector** features a cross between Doc Savage, The Shadow and The Spider.

Intimates unveiled

WILDCATS Version 3.0 writer Joe Casey is hoping readers will find his next WildStorm comic more to their liking than some of his recent titles.

Casey has joined forces with the DC imprint's head honcho, Jim Lee, to develop a new monthly series. Asked by **CI** whether he or Lee – whose work as an artist on **Batman** and more recently **Superman** propelled both titles into the upper reaches of the sales charts – came up with the initial concept for **The Intimates**, the writer responded, "I guess I'm the guilty party there. After **Automatic Kafka**, I wanted to try something a little more 'commercial' for WildStorm – which I think is in desperate need of an indigenous commercial hit – and I figured teen superheroes was the way to go. I gave Jim basic descriptions of the main characters and he and I developed their appearance from there."

Pictured: Guiseppe Camuncoli and Sandra Hope interior pages from the first issue of WildStorm's teen superhero monthly, ***The Intimates****.*

Watchmen pirates

Although the series is drawn by Italian **Hellblazer** artist Guiseppe Camuncoli and **Crimson**'s Sandra Hope, Lee is illustrating a comic within the comic.

When asked if this was to be an allegory in the way the pirate comic in **Watchmen** was allegorical, Casey replied, "It's similar, but I'm nowhere near the master of allegory that Alan Moore is. In a way, the comic – a spy series called *Supersonic Espionage Boom* – is meant to be another layer of information to be absorbed on a purely subjective level.

"Truthfully, the entire series is meant to recreate the info dump lifestyle that modern teenagers are faced with," Casey added. "They're getting bombarded by media wherever they turn and I wanted the book to feel relentless like that."

The Intimates takes place almost entirely inside the Seminary – a school run by former superheroes to teach and train the next generation of heroes.

"Very simple, very clean," stated Casey. "It's the emotional lives of the students that give the book it's grit. For the students, their motivation is the same motivation we all had during adolescence... survival."

Casey, who says he aims to depict teenage behaviour as accurately as possible, added, "I think what DC's promotion does not touch on is how emotionally charged this book really is. Emotions on a teenage level are oftentimes operatic in scope, even in the most mundane situations. Obviously, it doesn't make for good ad copy but as a writer, it's the real lure of the series.

"The school is just a back-drop for the intimate lives of these characters. Hence the title," the writer concluded.

***The Intimates** #1, priced $2.95, ships on November 3.*

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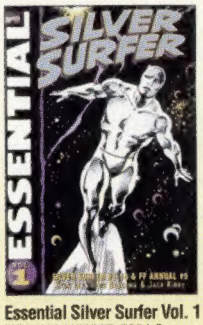

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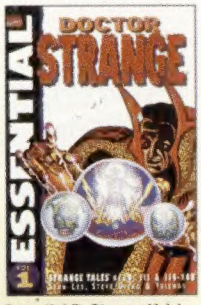

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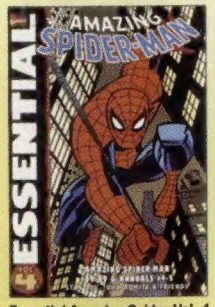

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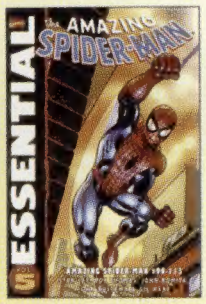

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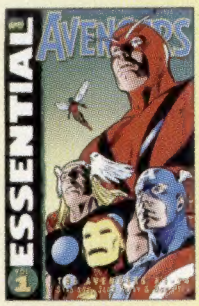

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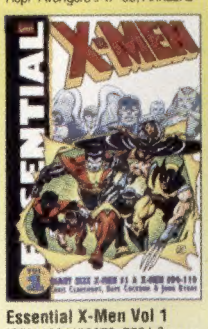

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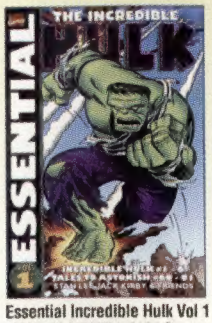

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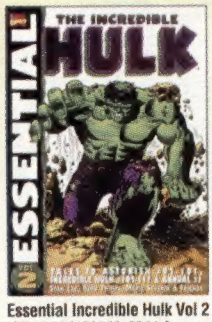

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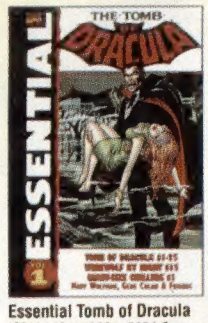

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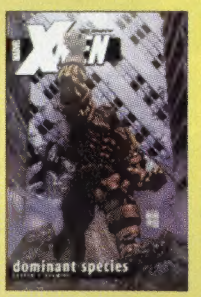

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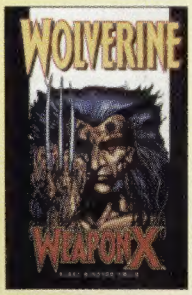

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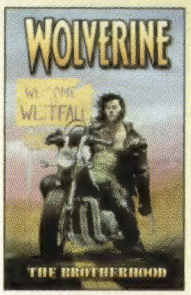

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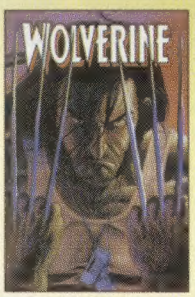

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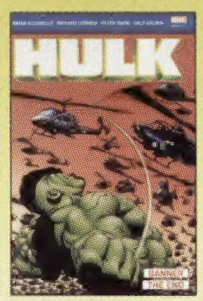

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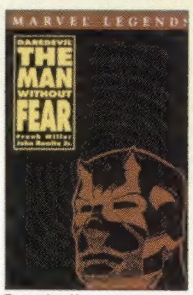

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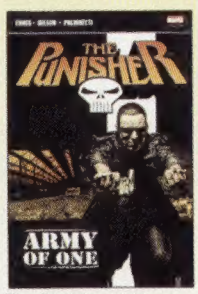

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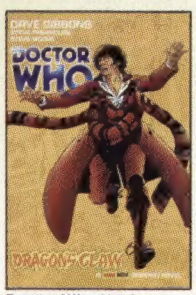

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In Brief

THE GOON's Eric Powell and artist Kyle Hotz are teaming up for an as-yet unscheduled Dark Horse four-parter.

According to editor Scott Allie, **Billy the Kid's Old Timey Oddities** is based around the widely held belief that Billy the Kid avoided death at the hands of Pat Garrett.

"The only people who know this are a group of sideshow 'performers', who enlist him in their freakish quest."

REX MUNDI's Arvid Nelson is making his Marvel debut.

He has written a Nightcrawler story, which is lined up for inclusion in **X-Men Unlimited** #7. The February release coincides with that of #13 of **Rex Mundi** – the Image title that Nelson and artist Eric J recently put on hiatus.

UNCONFIRMED reports suggest that Denny O'Neil, former group editor of DC's Bat-titles, is writing the novelisation of *Batman Begins*.

Although the movie directed by Christopher Nolan and starring Christian Bale premieres in the US on June 17, Del Rey will publish its $6.99 tie-in on April 26.

ANOTHER tie-in, Dorling Kindersley's 64-page **Batman Begins: The Visual Guide**, is being written by Scott Beatty.

"If you've seen DK's guides to the various Star Wars movies, you will know the basic gist of what the book will look and feel like," said the former **Batman: Gotham Knights** writer while discussing the hardcover.

FORMER com.x artist Daniel Boultwood, is writing and drawing a three-issue follow up to **Comicana One Shot Special**, his maiden title for AP Comics.

Premiering in January, Boultwood's $3.50 **Comicana** miniseries continues his story of two workers in a London-based comics shop.

DC IS cutting the frequency of Michael Moorcock's four-part **Elric: The Making of a Sorcerer** to bimonthly.

Originally set to ship on October 27 and November 24 respectively, issues #2 and 3 of the series, which premiered on September 22, are to be resolicited for December 29 and February 23. Drawn by Walter Simonson, both 48-page issues are priced $5.95.

IDW IS going back to print on **Metal Gear Solid** #1 two weeks before the first issue of its $3.99 tie-in with the Konami computer game hits the shops.

The second printing follows two to three weeks after the delayed first edition ships in October, and will feature a new cover by series artist Ashley Wood.

John Constantine uncovered

***Hellblazer** writer reveals essence of Vertigo's seedy Brit magician*

*Pictured: Story pages from Vertigo's 128-page **John Constantine: Hellblazer – All His Engines** graphic novel; art by Leonardo Manco.*

MIKE Carey is working on a hardcover graphic novel that reveals John Constantine for the trickster he is.

The English writer *[above]* told **CI** that **All His Engines** shows the star of **Hellblazer** as "somebody who, when he has no other weapons, has his mind, his cunning to fall back on."

Paradise Lost

"The title is a quote from **Paradise Lost**," explained Carey. "It refers to Satan and the fall from Heaven. The actual line is 'nor did he scape by all his engines but was headlong sent with his industrious crew to build in Hell.' We're applying the title really to John; 'engines' meaning stratagems, plots, tricks, devices."

Carey, who is currently writing Marvel's **Ultimate Elektra** as well as his regular Vertigo titles, **Hellblazer** and **Lucifer**, explained "We see him pitted against overwhelmingly superior forces and yet somehow managing to bluff them, to trick them, to deceive them. He uses his wits to bring about the outcome that he wants."

A 128-page tie-in with the *Constantine* movie – which stars Keanu Reeves in the title role and is released in the US on February 11 – **John Constantine: Hellblazer – All His Engines** is drawn by Leonardo Manco, who became regular **Hellblazer** artist with #201, which went on sale on October 27. The Argentinian artist's credits include **Hellstorm, Prince of Lies** and **Blaze of Glory** for Marvel.

The graphic novel strips its protagonist down to what Carey sees as the seedy magician's essence. "It's a statement of what I think is the core Constantine. It's a stripping down in terms of storytelling, or I guess you could say storytelling context."

No Keanu

"The idea," he added, "was that, although this is the John Constantine of the monthly series, it's intended to be accessible to people who've never read the comic and only know the character from the film.

"Don't get me wrong," he continued, "it's not Keanu but it's John who we see interacting only with Chas [Chandler] and Chas's family. We don't see any others of the supporting cast that has been built up in the last 17 years of the book. It's a story that's told in a lean, spare way and focuses mainly on John himself."

Carey stressed that **All His Engines** is in continuity before moving on to discuss the story, which, he said, came from wanting to put Constantine centre stage. "I wanted something that would allow us to show the keynotes of the character, the things that make him what he is."

Back to the wall

"That was one of my main goals but, at the same time, I wanted a story that would put him between a rock and a hard place," continued the writer. " One that would have him in a situation where he would have no friends to fall back on, where he had not one but several enemies – all of whom have got agendas for him, all of whom are closing in on him.

"It's just a question of what you can do when you're back is to the wall, your hands are empty and the monsters are closing in," he added.

Constantine's two main enemies in **All His Engines** are Beroul and the Aztec god of Death, Mictlantecuhtli.

Asked why he had elected to use something other than the more familiar Christian devils and demons as foes for Constantine, the writer said, "Again, this is partly to play off the movie slightly without actually having to stick to the film's version of the character. It was decided that some of the action would take place in London and some in Los Angeles and the idea of using Aztec gods just suggested itself."

Hell on Earth

Carey said the graphic novel is about Constantine trying to avert the possibility of Hell extending its empire to Earth. "Beroul is a demon who's setting up micro-hells on Earth, and when John runs up against him he has to recruit some even more unpleasant characters in order to defeat him. And every step he takes seems to get him in even deeper, until there's only one option open to him. But I'd rather not say what that is, beyond saying that it's very much a John Constantine sort of play. When you're all out of legal moves, change the rules of the game..."

***John Constantine: Hellblazer – All His Engines** hardcover, priced $24.95, ships January 19.*

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Something old, something new

***Thunderbolts** writers team up to bring new look to gang of Marvel villains-turned-heroes*

*Above: A double-page spread from the first issue of Marvel's **New Thunderbolts**; Tom Grummett art.*

THE THUNDERBOLTS are about to get a new lease of life. The writer who co-created the team of supervillains turned heroes is to join forces with his successor on the gang's title to usher in a new era.

Squadron Sinister

However, Fabian Nicieza told **CI** that the original **Thunderbolts** writer, Kurt Busiek, "is more advisor, idea machine and noodler than an actual co-writer" of Marvel's aptly titled **New Thunderbolts**. "We worked out the roster of the team together, with nearly all the characters being his idea. Then we worked out the entire first arc together with a good back and forth between us but I have actually been plotting and dialoguing."

The new team's line-up consists of original members Mach IV, Songbird and Atlas as well as Radioactive Man, Speed Demon – known as the Whizzer while with the Squadron Sinister, plus Blizzard and Joystick.

Also joining the team is Captain Marvel. Asked which of Marvel's three holders of that name this was, Nicieza responded cryptically, "The only Captain Marvel."

The two writers recently collaborated on **Avengers/ Thunderbolts**. A six-parter drawn by Tom Grummett – who is reunited with Busiek and Nicieza for the ongoing series – it sold well enough for **New Thunderbolts** to be given the go ahead.

Heroes Reborn

"Kurt and I wanted to do something a bit different with the group," explained Nicieza. "We felt a new mix was needed because the stories of several original characters within the context of 'will they be good guys or bad guys?' was, if not played out, in need of a bit of a rest so that they could come back fresher.

So, in essence," he said, "with half of the original team and half of a brand new team, we get a great mix of characters and a really nice dynamic."

The Thunderbolts first appeared when the Avengers vanished during the *Onslaught* set up to *Heroes Reborn*. By coincidence, they return just as that superhero team is reeling in the aftermath of the *Avengers Disassembled* storyline.

> ***"...they are ready to fill the void. This time it's not a scam. They mean to help, serve and protect."***
> *...Fabian Nicieza, co-writer*

"From a character standpoint, it's perfect, because once again the Avengers are not around and they are ready to fill the void," stated Nicieza. "This time, it's not a scam. They mean to help, serve and protect. The public, though always sceptical, wants for them to succeed."

Asked if the title being a relaunch might put off potential readers, the writer retorted, "What kind of friggin' question is that? It presupposes negativity. Why would someone be 'put off' by this new book? If you're curious, you'll check it out, if you're not, then you won't. If you like Marvel superhero comics with lots of fun stuff going on, exciting superhero art and funky characters in a universe that interrelates, you'll love this.

"If you like 47 pages of people in shadows talking to each other, you won't like this title," he added. "There are plenty of comics out there for everyone. Buy the ones you like.

"We have Radioactive Man in our comic. No one else does. He's Chinese. He's big and green. And for some completely unfathomable reason, he wears a skirt. How can anyone be 'put off' by that?" Nicieza concluded.

***New Thunderbolts** #1, priced $2.99, ships on November 10.*

*ONE OF the leading engineers and producers of dialogue, music and sound for the interactive/gaming industry is looking to make his mark on comics. Written in conjunction with Scott Cuthbertson, another comics newcomer, Keith Arem's debut graphic novel tells of the epic war being waged on Earth by Sebastian, Gideon and Seraphine, three angels banished from Heaven. His 120-page **Ascend** ships from Image on December 8, priced $14.95. It is drawn by role-playing game illustrator Christopher Shy* [cover art above].

Bagge unleashes his apocalyptic nerd

HATE! creator Peter Bagge is taking another look at the slacker generation, one that may be influenced by his short sojourn to Marvel for which he produced 2002's **Megalomaniacal Spider-Man** and the never-published **Incorrigible Hulk**.

Discussing **Apocalypse Nerd** with **CI**, the cartoonist said the black and white Dark Horse six-parter is set in and around modern day Seattle. The SF-style story is, he said, about "two old friends who manage to survive a nuclear attack on the city and now have to figure out how to continue to survive."

Those two buddies are "the bookish Perry – hence the 'nerd' in the title – and his more lowbrow friend, Gordo," added Bagge, who says his target audience is "whomever still thinks I'm funny, I guess.

"The idea was to put myself in the most desperate, grim scenario possible, figuring the end result would be worth a lot of laughs," he explained. "I'm hoping that its more dramatic moments will come off as dramatic. In that regard it's different from and more ambitious than my past work."

- **Apocalypse Nerd** also includes a backup starring George Washington, Thomas Jefferson and their peers.

"I wanted to do a comic about the Founding Fathers – an idea that evolved into a series of short backup vignettes," Bagge stated.

***Apocalypse Nerd** #1, priced $2.99, ships on January 12.*

*Above: Perry, the star of **Warrior Nerd**, Peter Bagge's Dark Horse six-parter.*

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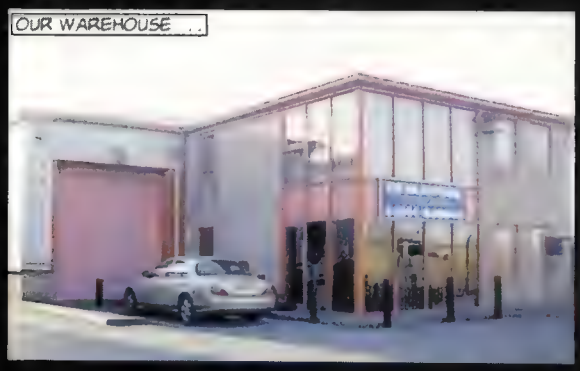

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Talking about the Incredibles...

*Instead of cowboys, spacemen bugs or monsters, Pixar Studios has chosen superheroes as the subject for its latest movie, The Incredibles. So **CI** asked some of the leading names in comics and film coverage what they thought of the end product...*

Our team of experts:
ED BRUBAKER (writer: Batman)
JOHN CASSADAY (artist: Astonishing X-Men)
PETER DAVID (writer: Incredible Hulk)
J. M. DEMATTEIS (writer: Formerly Known As The Justice League)
RON GARNEY (artist: JLA)
MIKE GRELL (artist: Iron Man)
MARK MILLAR (writer: The Ultimates)
MIKE S MILLER (artist: GI Joe vs the Transformers)
JERRY ORDWAY (artist: Planetary/JLA)
JIMMY PALMIOTTI (writer: The Monolith)
NICK SETCHFIELD (features editor: SFX)
BEAU SMITH (writer: Guy Gardner, Warrior)
ERIC STEPHENSON (executive director: Image Comics)
ANDREW SUMNER (publisher: Loaded, Uncut)
CHRIS WARNER (editor: Dark Horse Comics)
JAMES WHITE (news editor: Total Film)

Does the light-hearted approach only work because it's an animated movie?

Brubaker: I think the animated approach definitely helps getting something more lighthearted across, but the main thing is that Pixar don't just make great animated films, they make great films.

Toy Story 2 and *Bug's Life* are as good as any movies I've ever seen, and I rank them right below Miyazaki as the best animation houses in the world right now. They could make a movie about living snot and I'd be first in line to see it.

John Cassaday: Well, there was *Mystery Men*, which I liked and know many who dug it, but the mass movie-going audience didn't seemed to care or want to pay money to see it. But c'mon, "We've got a date with destiny... and she just ordered the lobster." That's magic, no?

DeMatteis: Absolutely. If a superhero comic isn't unbearably grim, it's worthless.

Grell: Let's not discount *Mystery Men* or the live-action TV show *The Tick* – both worked very well because they were live action.

Millar: Funny superhero movies just die a death. The best comedy comes from tragedy, whether it's *Dad's Army*, *Steptoe* or *League of Gentlemen*, and superheroes are too intrinsically silly to base a comedy around. It's just an easy target and gets as much laughs as *My Hero* or *Mystery Men*. That said, it really works as animation as long as the heart is in the right place and that looks to be the case with *The Incredibles*.

Miller: No, I think light-hearted comics are the best way to reach new, younger readers. That's why I'm producing several 'all-ages' titles along a similar vein to *The Incredibles*. Both come out this January from Image, one called **The Imaginaries**, about what happens to one super-heroic imaginary friend when he is forgotten by his creator and ends up in the Imagined Nation, where all forgotten imaginaries go. The other, **Lullaby**, is about a troup of children's lore characters, including Pinocchio, Alice (from Wonderland), Little Red Riding Hood and more, seeking out the dark force that contaminates the world of Lullaby. Both these books, as with *The Incredibles*, will reach both children and adults, with great art, fantastical elements, great writing, and a gripping story. It's a great combination for both film and comics.

Ordway: Personally, I think a light touch is fine even on live action superheroes. But it's a fine line between laughing with the characters and laughing at the characters. In *X-2*, there were a couple of funny moments. I look to the *Indiana Jones* movies as a good example of how to tell a good story, and have a good time at the movies.

Palmiotti: Making it animated sure makes it easier to get away with a lot of the visual gags. If it was live action, I am guessing the budget would be so high it would have never been made in the first place.

Stephenson: I personally think most superhero films could benefit from a bit more humor.

Sumner: I think the light-hearted approach works because: a) Brad Bird is a genius who loves this material and has no wish to laugh *at* it, only *with* it and b) *The Incredibles* material was *always* intended to be funny.

With the exception of the Adam West *Batman* (which I absolutely love, just as much as I love Frank Miller's **Batman** and Dini & Timm's superb animated *Batman*), I think that the rule here is: light-hearted adaptations work if the source material is light-hearted and they fail dismally if the source material is straight. For example, Jack Black's rumoured *Green Lantern* project would have been a fucking disaster.

Warner: You have to be careful. Someone once said that once a genre is successfully parodied, the parodied genre is killed. While that's not always the case, if comics creators begin widely to poke fun at the genre, we run the danger of making all books in the genre unintentionally funny, which is the kiss of death. Quite frankly, the vast majority of superhero books are already tottering on the brink of self-parody, so giving the genre a shove may not be such a good idea.

White: The film's tone is light and comedic because it's primarily aimed at a younger audience (though not as young as Pixar's previous work). But you can blend comedy with pathos and grit – provided you get it right. Both X-films and Spider-Man movies had laughs in the mix. And though I may be crucified for saying this, *Mystery Men* is funny. Patchy, but funny.

Is the fun side of superheroes on screen long overdue?

DeMatteis: I think that fun in general is long overdue.

Palmiotti: I think all superhero films have a fun side, this is just playing it for laughs from beginning to end. Wasn't the last *Batman* film supposed to be funny? Or *Daredevil*?

White: Provided it's done correctly, it's about the right time. Just keep the Wayans brothers away from the genre.

Setchfield: If it's true that every genre film cycle naturally ends in spoofery then yes, maybe this should signal the end of the superhero movie boom – but I doubt it, given that Nolan's *Batman* and Singer's *Superman* are waiting in the wings. And I'd rather have a smart, affectionate piece of piss-takery than a piece of demoralising twaddle like *Catwoman*.

Will *The Incredibles* help or hinder Hollywood's love affair with comics?

Cassaday: If it's both a good movie and does well, it should only help.

Grell: I doubt it will hurt. It's not like the days when a Mel Brooks spoof signalled the

deathknell for a whole genre. If anything, it's representative of the universal accept-ance of comics in the mainstream if entertainment. You can only do a film like this if you know everybody "gets it".

Millar: If it makes money (and it will), the love affair will continue. Hollywood is our trophy wife and as long as the account is seriously in credit she will be there to blow us as often as we want.

Miller: I think it could be a tremendous help, although comics are already a hot commodity in Hollywood.

Ordway: If it's successful, it will open up animation on the big screen to superheroes I think. Wouldn't **Plastic Man** be terrific in that form? Or even **Shazam**?

Palmiotti: If it's successful, it will help. But as long as it's well written, it will be a success in my eyes. Box office does not dictate quality on any level, look at this past summer.

Stephenson: I don't really see the film having much effect on comics at all, apart from the fact it might make animated super-hero movies a bit more of a going concern.

Sumner: If the movie's a hit (which it deserves to be) it can only help.

Warner: This may sound callous, but who cares? Comics movies have done very little to increase sales of comics. These are two different mediums. Just because someone sees a *Spider-Man* movie doesn't mean that all of a sudden that person will to start reading comics. For 99% of the movie audience, I'm sure the thought of reading comics never even crosses their minds. We should be pleased comics now seem to have a little more street cred with civilians, that we're no longer considered sleaze merchants, but we need to make sure we don't buy into the fantasy that the popularity of the genre (super-heroes) in film, games and toys will transfer to the popularity of the medium (comics). Millions of people seem to love music lyrics but still don't give a damn about poetry.

White: I hope it makes Hollywood appreciate that genuine affection and quality film-making should be cherished. It's superbly made, wears its comic fan heart on its sleeve and, while it pokes gentle fun at the genre, clearly comes from a mind that appreciates the art form. To skip the wanky pretension, it's a solid hit in the making: and that can only be good for Hollywood's relationship with comics.

Could this start a trend?

Cassaday: I think Pixar has a good grasp on the way to do this sort of thing, but its success will most likely lead to a slew of cheap imitations. It seems to be creative law.

David: A trend of superhero films? Check. Computer animated films? Check. Computer animated superhero comedies? Doubt it.

DeMatteis: Hey, maybe it could. Hmmm. A humorous take on superheroes...? I'd better rethink this. Maybe DC or Marvel would let me write a comic like that. But I don't think I could do it alone. I could call Keith Giffen, he'd be good at this kind of thing...

Grell: It takes years to get a movie on screen, so it's difficult to predict a trend unless it's a major box office hit, in which case copycats will follow as fast as they can be churned out. That's the nature of the beast.

Millar: I think we've moved beyond a trend in the sense that comicbook movies are much more varied now. I think we've become a genre now as opposed to being isolated as we were in the past. One bad *Batman* movie is enough to kill a franchise, but it takes a lot of bad movies to kill a genre.

Ordway: Again, success will bring imitators, some good, many bad. There's a tendency in adults to deride things they enjoyed as children, like they are embarrassed to admit they liked it in the first place. That's how you get a show like the 1960s TV *Batman*. Don't get me wrong, aged 9, I loved it. As an adult, I think they poked a bit too much fun.

Palmiotti: A trend? Yes, and the movie adaptation of **The Pro** will not be far behind. Trust me, it will happen... so beware!

Stephenson: I think there's a chance that Hollywood will look at the inevitable success of this film and start to wonder why there couldn't be more animated superhero films.

Sumner: The only useful trend it could start is that comicbook movies should always invest in a decent script. When they do (like *The Incredibles* has done, like both *X-Men* and *Spider-Man* flicks did), the artistic/box office dividends are obvious.

White: I think the trend may be underway already. Fox's *Fantastic Four*, we're told, is a "comedy-family" film. And there's *Sky High*, with Tim Allen, about a school for superheroes.

Do you have any comics industry-related thoughts about the movie?

Cassaday: It looks fresh and fun. The comic industry can't seem to poke fun at itself with any real quality or response, so someone outside of the field might as well give it a shot. And I think they're on the right track.

Ron Garney: I think the general public perception of superheroes would only benefit. It widens the appeal of a genre when there's a broader base and range of chara-cter for audiences and thereby a greater appreciation of the medium. In contrast, you don't want public perception of superheroes to be the outdated types of characters and the star of this movie as an overweight husband might make super-heroes seem outdated and unhip and make audiences feel the same way about comics heroes in general. I don't think will happen here, it may even work in the reverse.

Millar: Under 10s have little interest in superhero comics, no matter how we may try to kid ourselves with the animated comics (and I speak as someone who bled on **Superman Adventures** for 18 months). Kids are only interested in stuff that is backed up with a $50m marketing campaign as is the case here. If the Dark Horse comic brings in even five new readers it will all have been worth it.

Sumner: If *The Incredibles* is a success and paves the way for more clever genre-reverential projects like **Formerly Known As The Justice League**, this can only be a good thing. I think a huge part of why *The Incredibles* works is that you can see the love Bird and his collaborators have for the genre (a love that was also evident in Bird's fantastic *Iron Giant*. Why it didn't do better at the box office is a fucking mystery to me).

The Incredibles is set to open in the UK on November 19

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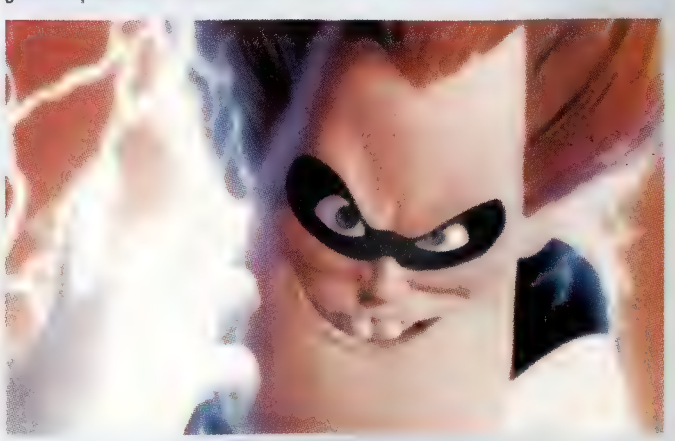

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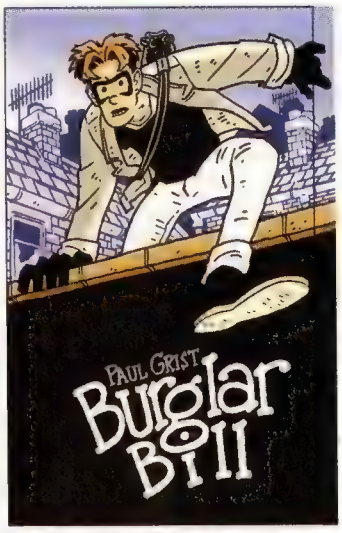
CONTINUING its drift away from total reliance on reprints of American Marvel comics, Panini UK is to launch another title containing home-grown strips. A four-weekly premiering on October 28, the £1.75 ***Marvel Rampage*** *will feature two five/six-page strips per 44-page issue. These are to star such heroes as Wolverine, the Hulk and the Fantastic Four – as shown above in a Paul Marshall and David Roach-drawn page from issue #2's FF story. "The 'challenge' was to create a Marvel-branded boys' lifestyle magazine for 7 to 12-year-olds that could dip into mainstream boys' stuff while still maintaining a superheroic profile," Panini editor Simon Frith told* ***CI****. "We worked the 'action' theme, and so anything that isn't Marvel in* ***Rampage*** *is still hard-hitting action orientated. But we still had to refrain from anything too gory or violent."*

Burglar Bill follows Jack Staff to Image



Above: The cover to the first issue of Paul Grist's Image six-parter, ***Burglar Bill****.*

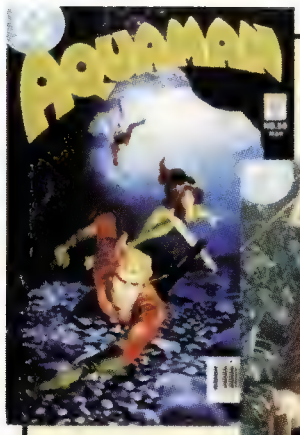
WITH his British superhero **Jack Staff** now well-established at Image, Paul Grist is introducing another of his Dancing Elephant Press creations to a larger US audience.

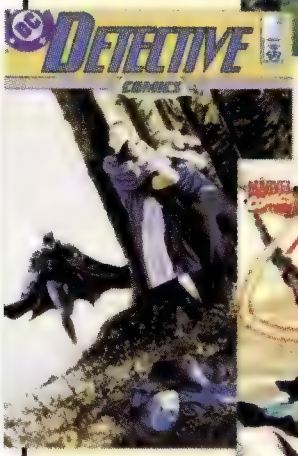
The English writer/artist is reworking his self-published 2003 **Burglar Bill** six-parter for a black and white Image series that will also include some more obscure stories of the thief's nocturnal activities.

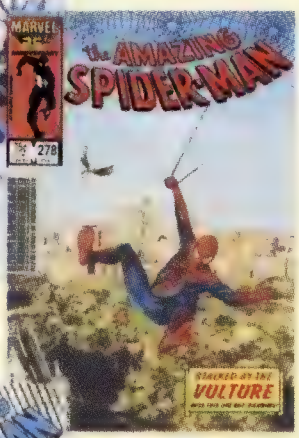
The 40-page **Burglar Bill** #1 will feature a new 10-page prologue together with the first *Burglar Bill* strip, a four-pager that appeared in Grist's 1986 mini-comic, **Short Stories**.

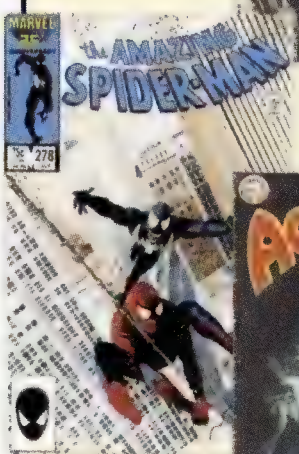
● Paul Grist's six-issue **Burglar Bill** series originally debuted from Trident in 1990 but the Leicester-based publisher aborted the title after only one issue.

Burglar Bill *#1, priced $2.95, ships on November 3.*









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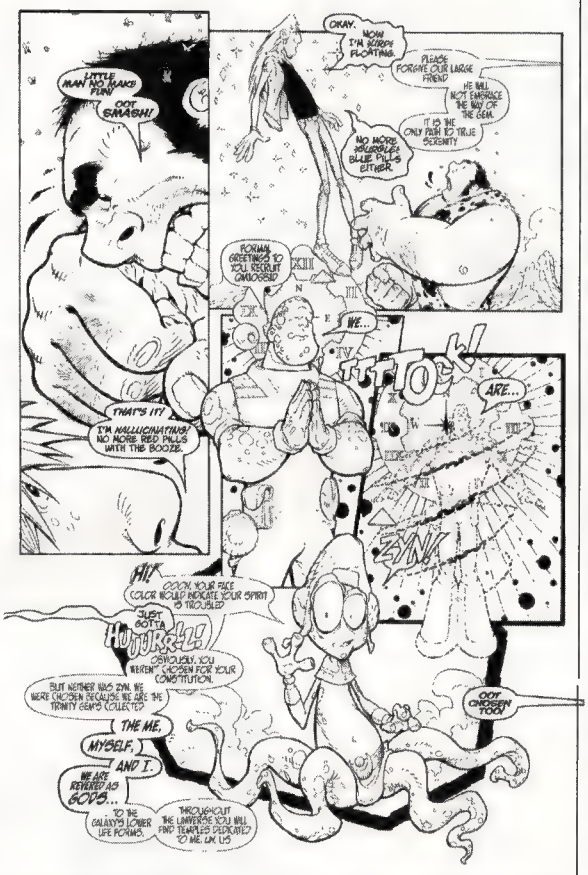
"Looney Tunes meets H G Wells"

ART THIBERT *[self portrait above]* does not believe in doing things by halves.

A noted artist whose career dates back to 1986 and WaRP Graphics' **Myth Adventures** #10, Thibert is embarking on his first solo project which, he told **CI**, involved having to create a universe "complete with characters, environments, vehicles – everything."

Thibert is probably best-known these days as inker on Marvel's **Ultimate...** titles. He describes his **Chrono Mechanics** as a humorous comic and admits he found writing such a challenge. "I have never done that before."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PLEASE FORGIVE OUR LARGE FRIEND
HE WILL NOT EMBRACE THE WAY OF THE CLAN.
IT IS THE ONLY PATH TO TRUE SERENITY
NO MORE YOURSELF'S BLUE PILLS EITHER.
ROMAN GREETINGS TO YOU, RECRUIT CAVOSSEO!
LITTLE MAN, NO PANIC! PUNY
GOT SMASH!
THAT'S IT!
I'M HALLUCINATING! NO MORE RED PILLS WITH THE BOOZE.
WE...
TTTOCK!
ARE...
ZYNK
HIT
OOOH, YOUR FACE COLOR WOULD INDICATE YOUR SPIRIT IS TROUBLED
JUST GOTTA HURRY!!!
OBVIOUSLY, YOU WEREN'T CHOSEN FOR YOUR CONSTITUTION.
BUT NEITHER WAS ZYNK. WE WERE CHOSEN BECAUSE WE ARE THE TRINITY GEMS COLLECTED
GOT CHOSEN TOO!
THE ME.
MYSELF,
AND I.
WE ARE REVERED AS GODS...
TO THE GALAXY'S LOWER LIFE FORMS.
THROUGHOUT THE UNIVERSE YOU WILL FIND TEMPLES DEDICATED TO ME, UM, US

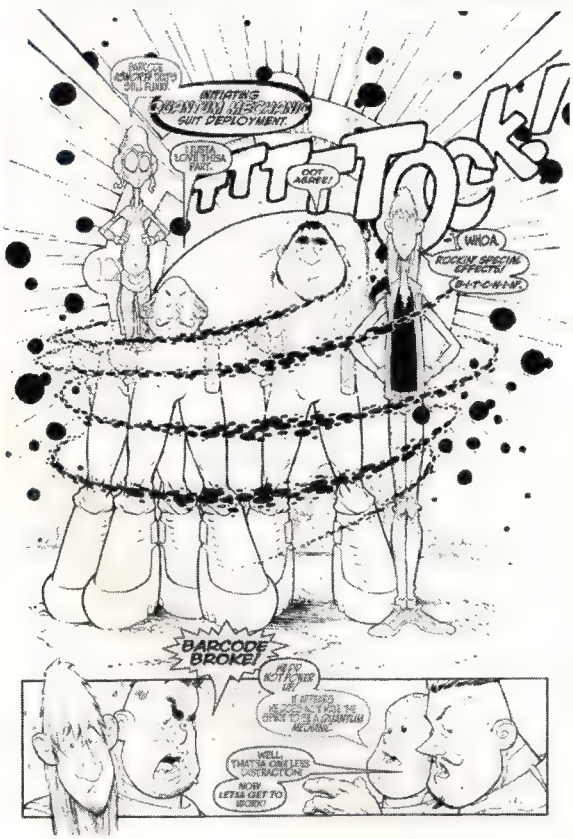
Looney Tunes

The title, which is to debut as a 48-page black and white Image one-shot, was originally **Quantum Mechanics** but had to be changed when Avatar Press claimed prior usage. Even though he says a copyright search had failed to uncover that series – which was solicited in 1999 – Thibert chose to go with **Chrono Mechanics** as the brand name instead.

Joining Thibert on the book, which he describes as *Looney Tunes* meets H G Wells' **Time Machine**, is co-writer Richard Birdsall, who has inked backgrounds for the artist on many of his Marvel and DC projects.

"The visuals for an entire universe were a whole other challenge," stated Thibert, who said he wanted to bring out his many influences from non-mainstream comics. "I have always liked Moebius and other European artists. I mixed those styles with my love for cartoons and cartooning and artists such as *Calvin & Hobbes*' Bill Waterson. Tex Avery and *Looney Tunes* also played a big part.

"Of course, my affection for slapstick like The Three Stooges is there too," he added.

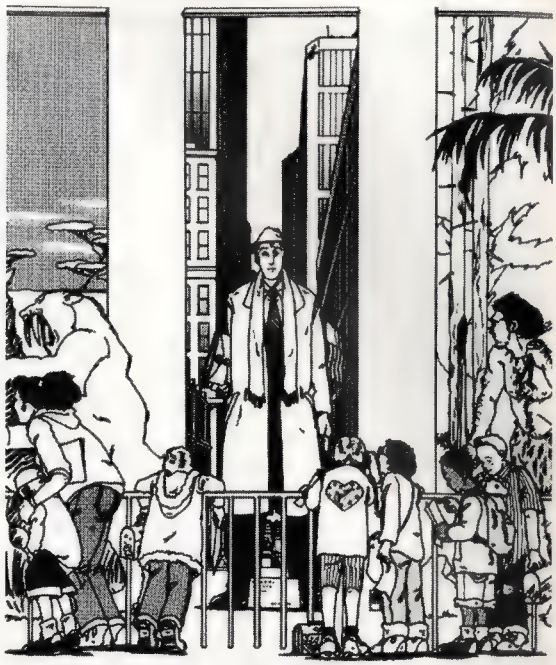


Playing God

Describing the basic concept, Thibert said, "Time, like a car's engine, has several different mechanical components, all of which can break down. When this happens, timelines start merging.

"So, as the mechanics are trying to fix the machine, more and more anomalies pop up, like a '50s café appearing in a prehistoric desert while a space ship flies over head. Or a cavalry riding by," explained the writer/artist. "These are examples of what happens when time runs amok."

***Chrono Mechanics**, priced $6.95, ships in November.*



Boychild brings new manga to UK

HAVING launched his UK-based indie publishing house with his own **Angel in the Woods** graphic novel – illustrated by Argentinian artist Jorge Heufemann – Sean Michael Wilson is adding an ongoing anthology title to his embryonic Boychild Productions line.

Speaking to **CI** about the project, the writer/publisher said, "**Manga Mover** is a regular anthology book started in an attempt to showcase the work of new and unknown Japanese manga creators."

Asked what was different about his title, he responded, "We wanted to show more mature manga stories than are often seen, yet still have some commercial potential. So the stories are generally on the intelligent side of the mainstream but with some more alternative ones mixed in. We are aiming for a little more mature market, older teenagers and adults."

Style mix

"The book is unusual in that it mixes the Western and Japanese reading format – two stories start from the front in western style, and two from the back in Japanese format," explained Wilson. "This is because when we selected the stories we found we had two stories in each format. So rather than redesign any of them to fit one style, we thought why not make it a two sided book – like a double A side single? I like it myself, it has a kind of pleasing symmetry to it.

Above: One of the flip covers to the first issue of Boychild Productions' ***Manga Movers*** *anthology. Top: Art from* Harvest *by Tomoko Amemiya.*

"We also intend featuring some stories by non Japanese in a manga style," Wilson added. "This is because there seems to be lot of them out there and, although many are very derivative, some are good and deserve a showing."

The first 68-page issue of the black and white **Manga Movers** features *Chimpira* – Japanese for 'young thug' – by Wilson and Juan Chavarigga – another Argentinian artist – as well as the pseudonymous Misako Rocks' autobiographical *Rock n Roll Love*, *Harvest* by Tomoko Amemiya and the world premiere of Sakura Mizuki's *Dinnertime*.

***Manga Movers** #1, priced £4/ $5.99, ships in January.*

In Brief

PAPERCUTZ second title is being written by **X-Factor**'s Stefan Petrucha and drawn by Sho Murase.

Launching through this NBM young readers imprint in February, the 5x7½" **Nancy Drew** graphic novel series begins with **The Demon of River Heights**. The 96-pager, in which the young investigator gets involved in an urban legend that just might be real, is priced $7.95.

COINCIDING with the release of its first **Nancy Drew** title, Papercutz is premiering another graphic novel series in the same 5x7½" 96-page format.

Unlike its companion title, which features new material, **The Hardy Boys** is to reprint stories from the comic by Scott Lobdell and artist Lea Hernandez. Also priced $7.95, the first volume, **The Ocean of Osyria** contains #1-3.

REX MUNDI artist Eric J is drawing a Moonstone mini.

He is collaborating with **Gotham Girls** writer Paul Storrie on **Revisionary**, an as-yet unscheduled two-parter.

DC HAS gone back to press for a second time on the 48-page first issue of its murder mystery seven-parter written by crime novelist Brad Meltzer.

Shipping on November 10, the third printing of the $3.95 **Identity Crisis** #1 features a new cover by series artists Rags Morales and Michael Bair.

MARC Silvestri is to give fans a look at his life in a $24.99 trade paperback due from his Top Cow Image imprint next May.

Marc Silvestri: A Tale of Art and Revolution is described as biographical.

HELLBLAZER writer Mike Carey is reviving an obscure Golden Age character for a **Detective Comics** backup that begins on December 1.

Drawn by **Codename Knockout**'s John Lucas, *The Barker* is a four-parter that kicks off in #801 of the $2.95 DC 40-pager. It features Carnie Callahan, the crime-solving carnival barker Joe Millard who Jack Cole introduced in 1942's **National Comics** #42.

MARIO Ruiz, who quit **Samson: Judge of Israel** publisher Metron Press over editorial differences has formed Valor Comics.

First up from the new company is **Jesus Christ: Son of Man**, a trilogy set in a world where the Roman Empire still holds sway and where Christ is yet to be born. Set to premiere next summer with **Magdalene**, the graphic novel series is drawn by the writer's **Samson** collaborator, Jerry A Novick.

BIZARRO SHMIZARRO
STORY - HARVEY PEKAR
ART - DEAN HASPIEL
COLOR - MATT MADDEN
EDITS - JOEY CAVALIERI
PHOOEY
LOOK AT THIS MESS
LOOK AT ALL THIS JUNK LAYING ARCUND MY HOUSE. ME RE SICK OF LIVING SCREWED UP BIZARRO LIFE ME GOTTA DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT
ACTION COMICS

Vertigo lands Harvey Pekar

*DC's mature readers imprint commissions graphic novel from **American Splendor** writer*

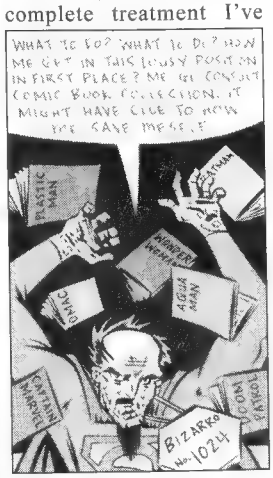
THE 2003 movie based on his long-running **American Splendor** comic has made Harvey Pekar something of a media star and Vertigo has signed the writer up for his first graphic novel.

Assisted by a variety of artists since 1976, Pekar has been chronicling events in his downtrodden life on an annual basis, first as a self-publisher and more recently through Dark Horse. He is now teaming up with Dean Haspiel, one of the contributors to his autobiographical slice-of-life series, to take a look at his formative years.

For DC's mature readers imprint, the pair are working on **The Quitter**, which is currently unscheduled.

Discussing the project, Pekar said, "This is the most complete treatment I've ever given to my childhood and early adulthood. I was very happy to pull things together and I'm pleased with what I wrote."

Editor Jonathan Vankin said, "**The Quitter** is Harvey's funniest and most heart-wrenching story yet. Harvey's longtime fans, as well as readers who've never experienced his distinctive approach to comics, will find this book as unforgettable as I do."


WHAT TO DO? WHAT TO DO? HOW ME GET IN THIS LOUSY POSITION IN FIRST PLACE? ME GO CONVENT COMIC BOOK CONVENTION. IT MIGHT HAVE CLUE TO HOW TO SAVE MESELF
PLASTIC MAN
BATMAN
WONDER WOMAN
AQUA MAN
COMIC
BIZARRO No. 1024

*Pictured: Frames from Harvey Pekar and Dean Haspiel's contribution to DC's 200-page hardcover anthology, **Bizarro World**; art by Haspiel.*

Bizarro World

Pekar has already worked with the series' artist on a DC project. With Haspiel – possibly best-known for his collaboration with writer Evan Dorkin on Marvel's four-issue **Startling Stories** arc *The Thing: Night Falls on Yancy Street* – he has produced a strip starring a comic-collecting Bizarro as their input to a follow up to 2001's **Bizarro Comics**.

A deluxe hardcover, the 200-page **Bizarro World** features a veritable who's who of alternative cartoonists, each putting their own unique and iconoclastic spin on the DC Universe and its superhero inhabitants.

Kyle Baker, Peter Bagge, Gilbert Hernandez and Craig Thompson are among the well-known cartoonists contributing to this anthology. Hunt Emerson, Andi Watson, Eddie Campbell and Paul Grist are among the British contingent.

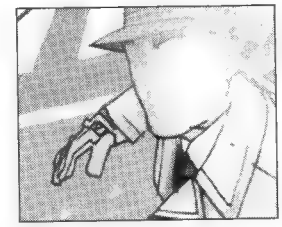
***Bizarro World** hardcover, priced $29.95, ships on February 2.*

Question returns

FORMER **Aquaman** writer Rick Veitch and artist Tommy Lee Edwards are to revive the Question for a DC mini that brings the faceless hero created by Steve Ditko to Metropolis.

Asked what attracted him to the series, Edwards, whose credits include **Batman: Shadow of the Bat** and Helix's **Gemini Blood**, said, "**The Question** will be a finite six-issue limited series-which is the kind of comic I prefer to draw, write, or read. It's on a pretty loose schedule, which lets me devote time to other illustration work and writing.

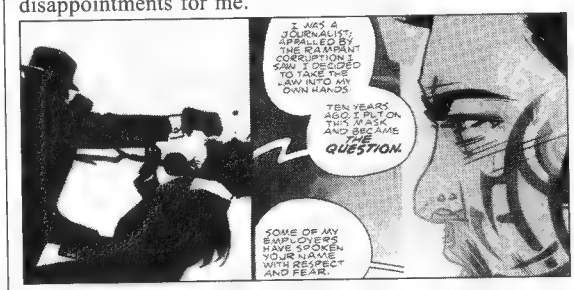
"I'd been turning down most comic job offers," added Edwards, who produces only sporadic comics work, "as I had been so busy doing other types of illustration. I rarely enjoy drawing the typical superhero fare and the last couple of mainstream comics I drew were creative disappointments for me.



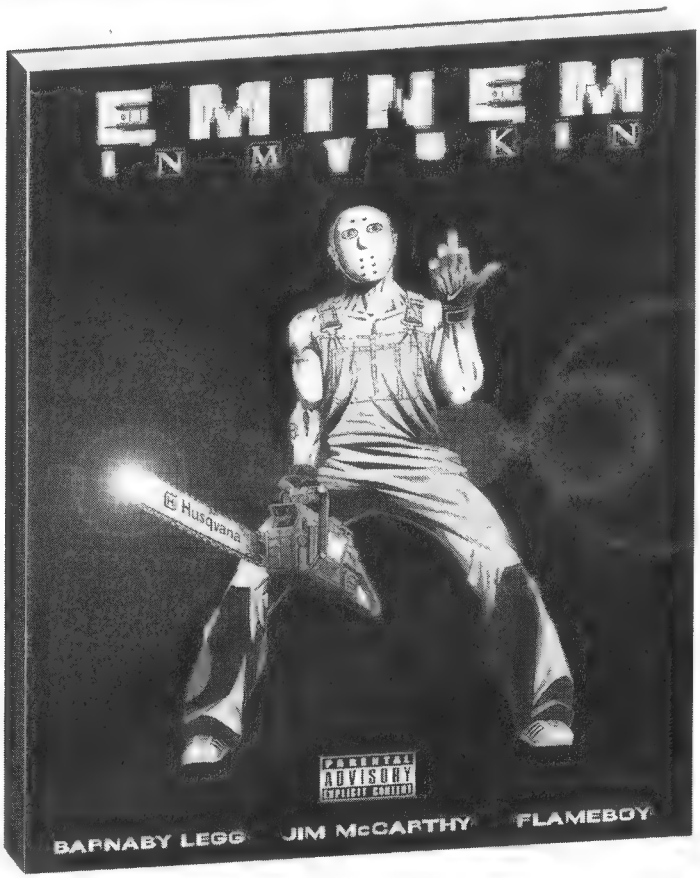
*Above and below: Frames from the first issue of **The Question**, DC's six-part revival of the character created by Steve Ditko for Charlton Comics; art by Tommy Lee Edwards.*

"The Question that Rick Veitch is writing for this series is very much a link to the original Ditko creation," he added. "Vic Sage is very similar to the original take back in the day, however I find today's Question to be a bit more ruthless. This is a very smart, insightful and story-driven comic with a lot of action and mystery.

***The Question** #1, priced $2.95, ships on November 3.*


I WAS A JOURNALIST, APPALLED BY THE RAMPANT CORRUPTION I SAW. I DECIDED TO TAKE THE LAW INTO MY OWN HANDS.
TEN YEARS AGO, I PLUNGED INTO THIS WASH AND BECAME THE QUESTION.
SOME OF MY EMPLOYERS HAVE SPOKEN YOUR NAME WITH RESPECT AND FEAR.

*MARVEL is reviving its youngest team of heroes but this time **Power Pack** is to be a **Marvel Age** title. Written by former Marvel editor Marc (**Guardians**) Sumerak and drawn by the DC Thomson sounding **Gus Beezer** and **Spider-Man** artist, Gurihiru [art above], the February launching series is to feature the Power siblings in new adventures. It also provides them with a new origin.*



*FOLLOWING the success of their **Godspeed** Kurt Cobain graphic novel for the same publisher, Jim* (Bad Company) *McCarthy and co-author Barnaby Legg have scripted **Eminem: In My Skin** for Omnibus Press as a £10.95 large-format 96-page softback. Illustrated by **Godspeed**'s Flameboy along with Al (**Spiral Cage**) Davison and Kev (**Iron Man**) Hopgood, it goes on sale this month. A US edition, with a toned-down cover, has also been produced, priced $19.95.*

Eagle awards set new benchmark

Industry's longest-established awards break all records in 28th year, with over 13,000 readers' votes being cast

ESTABLISHED in 1976, the Eagle Awards went on hiatus three years ago, following Kev F. Sutherland's desire to return to his own National Comics Awards at his annual UK Comics Festival.

Now, with the new Comic Expo event replacing Sutherland's Bristol show, the Eagles have again been revived, with the results of the voting on titles published during 2003 set to be announced at the show on the evening of November 5.

Unique in that they reflect the people's choice for favourite creators and creations rather than the misleading "best" misnomer used by more recent awards, the Eagles comprise two distinct stages. This year professionals from around the world were asked to nominate their personal favourites, with the top-scoring three in each category having appeared on the voting form.

As well as the traditional printed versions of the voting form, this year marked the first time that online voting was also allowed.

Above: Sponsored by Ace Comics, the impressive 2004 Eagle Award, with an antique bronze finish and a 13" wingspan.

As invariably occurs, there were attempts to influence the results with ballot stuffing, but the organisers are confident the safeguards in place have prevented any bias.

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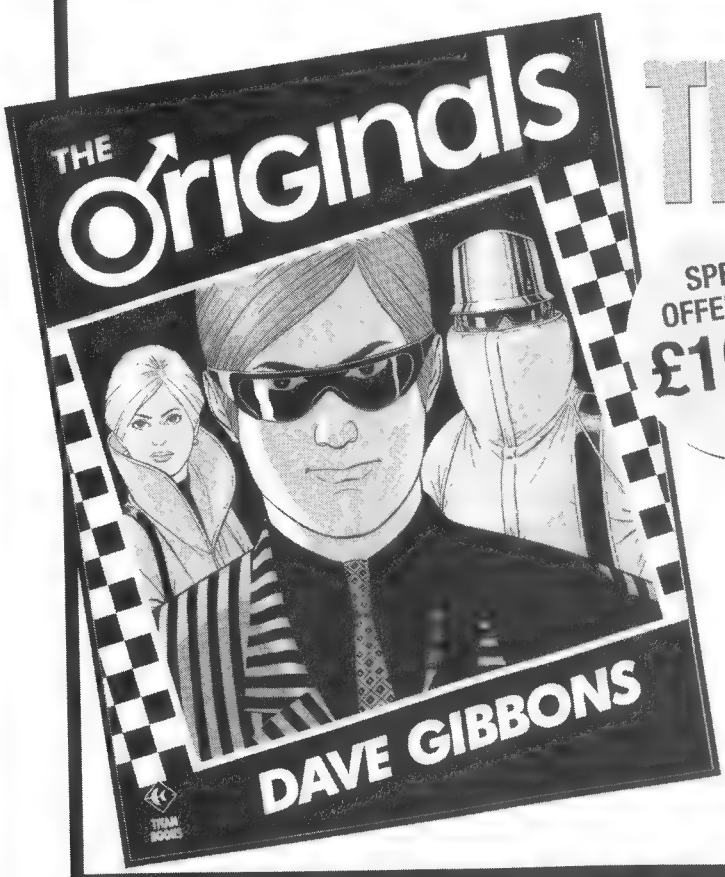

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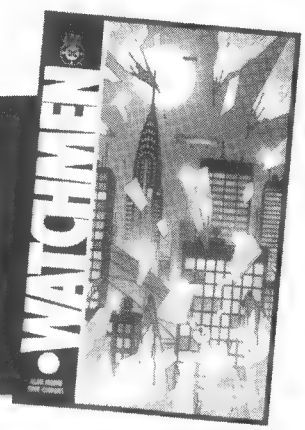

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*On May 13, Filipino comics artist Vic Catan Jr (Vicatan) died at the Maharlika Hospital in Taguig, Philippines following his second heart attack. After more than 20 years on Filipino comics, Vicatan worked on US titles during the '70s and '80s, including DC's **G.I. Combat**, **Ghosts**, **Secrets of Haunted House**, **Sgt Rock**, **The Unexpected** and **Weird War Tales**, Archie's **The Fly**, and – most famously – the Warren magazines.*

Irv Novick: 1916-2004

PROBABLY best remembered for his Silver Age DC work on Batman, The Flash, Lois Lane and Wonder Woman, Irv Novick died aged 88 on October 15, following a long illness and complications resulting from a fall.

His career spanned over 50 years, starting at MLJ (now Archie Comics) on **Blue Ribbon Comics** #2, dated December 1939 where he drew the first episode of *Bob Phantom*. The following month he produced the cover art and lead story, introducing the original patriotic US superhero The Shield, for **Pep Comics** #1.

He stayed with MLJ on such heroes as The Shield, Hangman and Steel Sterling until the mid-'40s, when the company cut back on adventure titles in favour of the increasingly popular Archie-led humour line.

Following two minor syndicated strips, he then went to DC to again work with Robert Kanigher, an MLJ scriptwriter turned DC war comics editor. He also drew for **Boys' Life** and provided art for advertising until he became the first freelancer to receive a contract from DC, guaranteeing top rate regular work and benefits.

In 1968 he moved to **Batman** and pencilling DC's leading superhero titles, where he remained until poor eyesight forced his retirement.

*Above: Irv Novick's original unused cover art for 1969's **Batman** #209 alongside his final published version.*

CI #176 competition winners

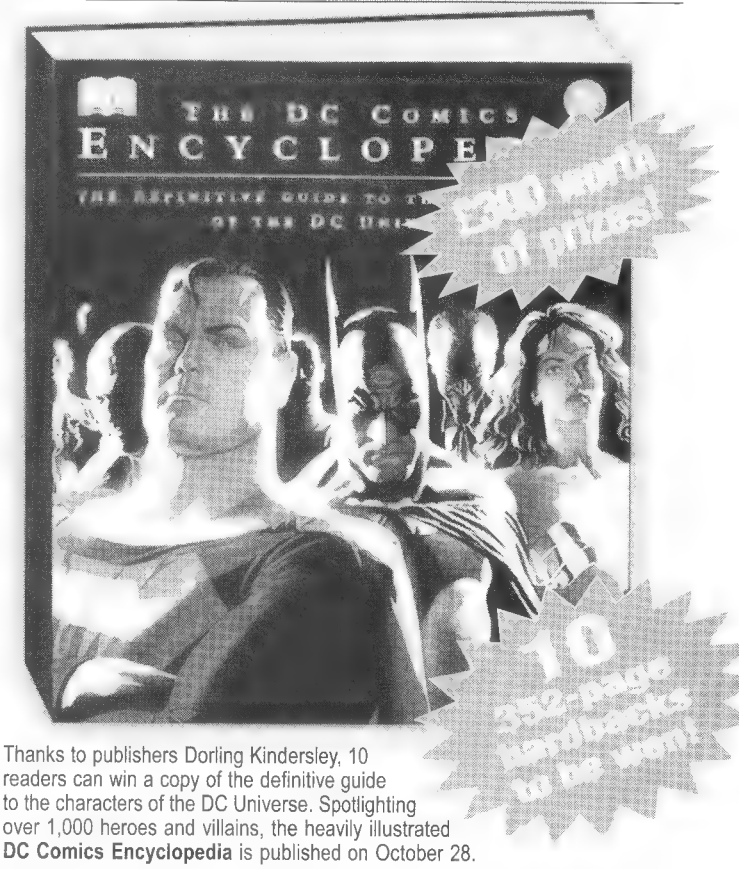
IN **CI** #176, three readers were offered the opportunity to win all four seasons of the *Transformers* TV series on DVD in a cool collector's tin, courtesy of Metrodome. The lucky winners were:

Daniel Boydell, Southport, Merseyside
Franco Cappiello, Pixton Way, Croydon
Nathan Neagle, Willenhall, West Midlands

Reader votes scored the 10 most popular sections of the issue as:

1 News International (25.8%)
2 Reviews (12.7%)
3 Sez Dez (6.6%)
4= NetWorks (6.3%)
San Diego report (6.3%)
6 Advance Listings (6.0%)
7 Talking Shop (5.1%)
8 Q and A (4.9%)
9 Novel Graphics (4.2%)
10 Letters/Comic Cuts (4.0%)

The highest scoring section as the least popular was "None, they're all fine" at 24.6%, with *Novel Graphics* once more splitting the audience at ninth favourite (above), but also the most unpopular section with 17.5% negative votes, followed by *Talking Shop* with 12.3%.



Thanks to publishers Dorling Kindersley, 10 readers can win a copy of the definitive guide to the characters of the DC Universe. Spotlighting over 1,000 heroes and villains, the heavily illustrated **DC Comics Encyclopedia** is published on October 28.

To enter, simply choose the correct answer to the following question:

Which of the following is not a DC Comics character?

a) Doctor Mid-Nite
b) Doctor Druid
c) Doctor Polaris

Name: _____
(Please print)

Address: _____
(Street & number)

_____
(Town or city)

_____
(County or State, post code or zip code and country if outside UK)

The winners will be selected and announced in Comics International #180

Please also complete the following:
My five favourite features this issue are (please mark in order as *1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th* – no ticks):

___ NEWS INTERNATIONAL
___ NEWS ROUNDUP
___ SEZ DEZ
___ INCREDIBLES FEATURE
___ TALKING SHOP
___ NOVEL GRAPHICS
___ FRAME TO FRAME
___ REVIEWS
___ BIFF'S ILLUMINATIONS
___ ADVANCE LISTINGS
___ IN THE GUTTER
___ NETWORKS
___ Q&A
___ COMMENT
___ COMICS ECONOMICS
___ LETTERS/COMIC CUTS
___ EVENTS GUIDE
___ ADVERTISEMENTS
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___ DIRECTORY

PLUS... which of the above is your LEAST favourite, the one you skipped reading, the one you wish we'd replace with a new contender for the top spot:

_____

Send this form (sorry, no faxes, copies or e-mails) to:

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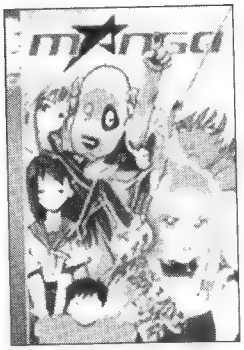
COMICS INTERNATIONAL,
345 DITCHLING ROAD, BRIGHTON BN1 6JJ

All entries must be postmarked before December 10th, 2004

... news round up... news round up... news round up... news round up... news round



Rising Stars of TokyoPop

MICHAEL Vega is the latest finalist in TokyoPop's *Rising Stars of Manga* competition to win his own book deal with the Los Angeles-based manga publisher.

His **Dark Moon Diary** is to be released late next year. Written by Che Gilson and inked by Diana X, it is the fifth graphic novel to come from a winning entrant in the annual talent search. The grand prize winner in this year's competition, the fourth, was 25-year old graphic designer Andy Helms. His winning manga, *Bombo versus Everything*, plus those of the other nine finalists, will be featured in the 224-page **Rising Stars of Manga** volume 4. The black and white digest-sized softcover *[cover left]* goes on sale on December 7, priced $9.99.

No more H-E-R-O

WILL Pfeiffer's reworking of DC's *Dial H for Hero* concept is being axed but the writer said he had sufficient warning to be able to bring his storylines to a satisfactory conclusion.

H-E-R-O ends on November 17 with #22. The $2.50 comic is drawn by Dale Eaglesham and Wade von Grawbadger.

"As far as I'm concerned, this is the ending of the series, and if another issue of **H-E-R-O** – or some other version of *Dial H* - is never published, it will feel like a real conclusion," stated Pfeiffer, who said readers would learn the final fate of the main characters. "The H-device is in the last scene, and, though the story ties up, there's definite potential for more tales – a lot more.

"This is the ending I've been planning for a while," he added, "although I never really mentioned to anyone at DC how I specifically wanted to bring it all together. I just wrote up the last scene, sent in the script and waited. Thankfully, [editor] Peter Tomasi, who's been a huge part of this book's success, liked it a lot. More than that, I don't want to say."

Mary Jane not necessarily dead

ALTHOUGH the last solicited issue of **Mary Jane** was the September 15-shipping #4, writer Sean McKeever is confident the $2.25 *Marvel Age* series starring Spider-Man's girlfriend is only on hiatus.

"It is currently in a holding pattern until the folks at Marvel can assess the series' interest outside of the comicbook market," he told **CI**.

Conan line expands

DARK Horse has a number of currently unscheduled spin-offs from its highly successful **Conan** comic in the pipeline.

Elektra: The Hand writer Akira Yoshida is working on **Conan and the Demon of Khitai** – a six-parter illustrated by Alan Wang – while **The Sandman**'s P. Craig Russell is writing and drawing an as-yet untitled three-issue mini. In addition, Kurt Busiek – who produces the monthly **Conan** title in tandem with artist Cary Nord – is co-writing a Thothamon miniseries with **Swamp Thing** co-creator Len Wein.

Merry Christmas, APC

THIS December St Albans-based AP Comics is to publish its first Christmas comic.

A 44-pager, the aptly titled **APC Christmas Special** is priced $4.95. The comic ships with five alternate covers, each spotlighting one of the one-shot's five eight-page festively themed stories: *Assassin School*, *B1N4RY [cover left – art by Jim Sutherns]*, *The Chase*, *Comicana* and *Monster Club*.

Bimonthly Warhammer

GAMES Workshop's **Warhammer Monthly** is undergoing a slight title alteration as a result of a change of frequency.

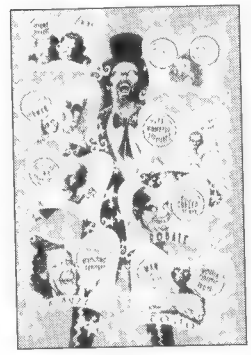
Launched in 1998 as a complement to the Nottingham-based publisher's massively successful role-playing games line, the series – now known as **Warhammer Comic** – is bimonthly with #84 shipping in July and #85 following on September 23.

With creators asked to put work on hold, rumours have circulated suggesting the black and white comic had, in fact, been cancelled. However, as a Games Workshop spokesman told **CI**, **Warhammer** editorial works a year to 18 months in advance. With the volume of completed strips already in house, the change of frequency effectively doubled their lead time to two or three years.

No more Future

THE PUBLISHING house formed by Bob Layton, David Michelinie and Dick Giordano has ceased operations.

Launched in 2002, Future Entertainment published such titles as **Deathmask**, **Metallix**, **Peacekeeper** and **Freemind**. Layton is planning to return to comics freelancing while continuing to work in Hollywood on several projects – among them *Deathmask* and *Freemind* – currently in development there.



Karney comes to IDW

AFTER appearing in Kevin Smith's *Mallrats*, *Chasing Amy* and *Jay & Silent Bob Strike Back* as obsessive comics fan Steve-Dave, *Vulgar* screenwriter Bryan Johnson is writing his first comic.

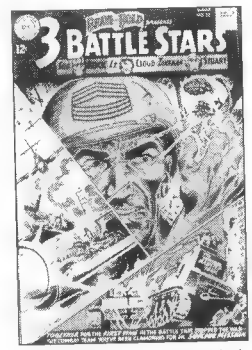
Johnson is to be joined on IDW's **Karney** by his on-screen partner, 'Fanboy' Walt Flanagan, who is drawing the four-parter *[promo art left]*. The miniseries, which launches next April, tells the story of a travelling carnival that has a sinister purpose.

Another comics newcomer, Flanagan runs Smith's New Jersey comics shop, Jay & Bob's Secret Stash.

Indiana Bond

IN COLLABORATION with Andrew Cosby, co-creator/writer of TV's *Haunted*, **Elseworld's Finest: Supergirl and Batgirl** artist Matt Haley is developing **Jack Hunter: G.I. Spy** for Atomeka.

The title is to debut in an as-yet unscheduled preview special before being launched as a series of one-shots. "It is," says Haley, "basically a World War II pulp adventure – James Bond meets Indiana Jones with Albert Einstein as Q."



Team-Ups Archives

GREEN Arrow, the Manhunter from Mars, Aquaman, Hawkman, Atom, Flash and Metal Men are just some of the heroes featured in a new addition to DC's growing line of hardcover **Archives**.

The first volume of **The Brave and the Bold Team-Ups Archives** features stories by writers Bob Haney and Robert Kanigher drawn by such artists as Joe Kubert, Alex Toth and Ramona Fradon. Scheduled for next April, it reprints the ground-breaking stories from issues #50-56 and 59 of the DC series that began in 1955 as an adventure comic before being transformed into a tryout title four years later.

With 1963's #50 **The Brave and the Bold** became the first series regularly dedicated to team-ups between different heroes. Shown above left is the cover to issue #52 [art by Kubert], which featured Sgt Rock, the Haunted Tank and Johnny Cloud.

Comic Book Library

TOPICS Entertainment's follow up to its ***Marvel Comic Book Library*** will cost an extra $20 but contains a whole lot more than the first 10 stories of Spider-Man, the Fantastic Four, Daredevil, Iron Man, the new X-Men et al offered by its predecessor.

Unlike the earlier title, which limited itself to the strips, ***The Amazing Spider-Man Fortieth Anniversary Collection*** features the entire contents of the first 500 issues of **Amazing Spider-Man** as well the web-slinger's origin tale from **Amazing Fantasy** #15. Consisting of 10 CD-Roms, the set goes on sale in October, priced $49.95.

Lady Death: Resurrected again

SHE IS certainly a survivor. Having withstood the Chaos! Comics bankruptcy and the collapse of CrossGeneration Comics, Lady Death is back at Avatar Press where, this November, creator/writer Brian Pulido will preview two series featuring different incarnations of his human/devil hybrid.

people in the news... people in the

MANHUNTER penciller ***Jesus Saiz*** has signed an exclusive two-year agreement with DC.

TOP COW Productions has promoted ***Phil Smith*** from part-time editorial assistant to full-time editor.

Smith, who joined the Marc Silvestri-headed Image imprint in 2001 as an intern, is to be responsible for trade paperbacks and submissions.

AFTER 24 years, ***Dick Jude*** is leaving what is considered to be Europe's most important chain of pop culture stores.

Jude, who worked his way up from book buyer/assistant manager of a single shop to be senior buyer for the entire Forbidden Planet chain, is moving on to Cards Inc. He is to be the Watford-based trading card manufacturer's product manager with responsibility for non-sports trading card product.

JOHN Dokes is back at Marvel.

Dokes, who was among those let go by the New York-based publisher in late 1998, is to be director of marketing for

up... news round up..... news round up... news round up... news round up... news

up... news round up... news round up... news round up... news round up... news round

Shipping in November, the 16-page **Lady Death: Dead Rising** is priced $2.50. It offers a sneak peek at **Medieval Lady Death**, which continues from where CrossGen's **Lady Death: A Medieval Tale** left off, and is drawn by Brazilian Studio 3 artist Di Amorim. It launches in February.

The black and white Avatar one-shot also provides a first look at the return of the original, Chaos! version of the albino bad girl. Scheduled for an April kick-off, the as-yet untitled series is illustrated by Romano Molenaar, the Dutch artist who has already worked on a number of **Lady Death** projects with Pulido.

Warlock gone, again

WRITER Greg Pak's attempt to re-invent one of Marvel's cosmic champions as the more down-to-earth star of his own title has failed.

Warlock is cancelled as of #4, which ships on December 8. The $2.99 series was drawn by Charlie Adlard, who told **CI** he will continue to draw Robert Kirkman's **The Walking Dead** for Image.

The British artist also has two currently unscheduled projects in the pipeline: a second *Savage* serial for **2000 AD** and **Rock Bottom**, an AiT/Planet Lar graphic novel written by **WildCats Version 3.0**'s Joe Casey, which is unlikely to appear before 2006.

Fighting corporate forces

UNMARKETABLE is Tom Hart's latest **Hutch Owens** graphic novel.

Shipping from Top Shelf in November, the 208-page softcover continues the adventures of the outrageous homeless rebel who battles the corporate forces that control our lives. The black and white volume *[cover art left]* is priced $17.95.

Fantasy adaptation

AP COMICS' former **Monster Club** artist, Theo Bain is developing a comicbook version of Wil Radcliffe's fantasy novel, **Noggle Stones**.

The author is currently looking for a publisher for the British illustrator's adaptation, which is being developed through Runemasters Studios.

Monolith toppled

DC IS axing **Monolith**, the series created by writers Jimmy Palmiotti and Justin Gray with artist Phil Winslade.

The $2.95 series finishes on January 12 with #12.

Heroic return continues

AFTER its relaunch of **Flare**, the title that brought Heroic Publishing back to printed comics after more than a decade of web publishing, the California-based company is adding a second title.

Another revival, **The Black Enchantress** is set for a December 15 launch. Shown left is the cover to the first issue, which features art by series regular J. Adam Walters. The $2.99 series is written by Wilson Hill, who, like his artistic collaborator is also a newcomer to the industry.

No conclusion yet part 1

ALREADY truncated from an ongoing series to an eight-parter, **Kinetic** is fast becoming the comic that won't die.

The final two issues of Kelley Puckett and artist Warren Pleece's DC/Focus title keep being delayed. With issue #7 pushed back to October 13 from September 22, the final shipping date of the last issue is again in doubt. Originally scheduled for October 27, the $2.50 #8 is currently delayed until November 17.

No conclusion yet part 2

ENGINEHEAD is another foreshortened DC series that is not going quietly into the night.

Originally solicited as an eight-parter, the $2.50 comic written by Joe Kelly and drawn by Ted McKeever was due to end – two issues early – on September 29. However, with the penultimate issue delayed from August 4 to October 13, #6, has been removed from the schedule. It will be resolicited at a later date.

Dark Knight across Europe

BATMAN and the Joker are to join forces to hunt a mysterious foe in a fully painted prestige format four-part series that brings together creative talent from both sides of the Atlantic.

Spearheaded by Jim Lee, who is to illustrate the first issue *[art left]*, **Batman: Europa** takes the Dark Knight and his nemesis from Paris to Berlin to Prague and, ultimately, Rome. The miniseries is written by Lee's **Superman** partner Brian (**100 Bullets**) Azzarello and Matteo Casali, the Italian writer best known for **Bonerest**.

Issue #2 of the series, which is scheduled for late next summer, is being painted by **Swamp Thing**'s Giuseppe Camuncoli while **Secret Wars**' Gabriele Dell'Otto is to provide art for the concluding chapter. The artist for the third issue has yet to be assigned by DC.

Momentary Diversion

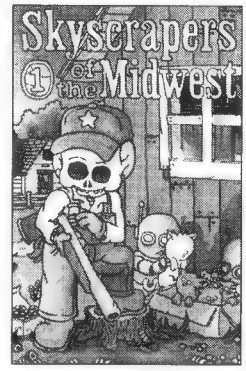
CARTOONIST Chris Onstad's online black and white daily strip set at 62 Achewood Court – home to a dysfunctional menagerie of anthropomorphs and robots – is to be collected in a series of three trade paperbacks.

Subtitled **A Momentary Diversion on the Road to the Grave**, the 180-page first volume of **Achewood** ships from Checker Book Publishing in November, priced $19.95. The second book is currently scheduled to follow in March or April.

Jetta moves to Shooting Star

HAVING published its eponymous anthology since 2002, Shooting Star Comics is now adding a second title.

Martheus Antone Wade is bringing his **Jetta: Tales of the Toshigawa** to the Georgia-based publisher, which will relaunch the comic next April with an 80-page graphic novel sub-titled **Defiance**. Previously self-published by Wade under his own MAW Productions imprint, the futuristic series focuses on Shianndrea Toshigawa – the Chosen One, who leads the Toshigawa Warriors against her father, Terminus, and his evil organisation, the Knave.



Rural solitude and sadness

THE WINNER of the 2004 Isotope Award for Excellence in Mini-Comics is taking his tale of rural solitude and sadness in a land full of anthropomorphic country cats to Adhouse Books.

The Virginia-based publisher will be relaunching Josh Cotter's **Skyscrapers of the Mid-West** in December with a 56-page first issue *[cover left]* that reprints his first two mini-comics. A second issue of the black and white title – which is priced $5 – is being lined up for a 2005 release.

Abadazad at Disney

CAL PUBLISHING, an indirect subsidiary of Walt Disney, has paid $1 million to acquire the assets of CrossGeneration Comics, the bankrupt Florida-based publisher established by Mark Alessi in 2000.

Speaking exclusively to **CI**, artist Mike Ploog said the move paves the way for the return of **Abadazad**, the all-ages comic he co-created with writer J.M. DeMatteis. Ploog said the title is likely to reappear through another Disney subsidiary, Hyperion Press.

Noble Causes upgrade

IMAGE is to upgrade writer/creator Jay Faerber's third **Noble Causes** miniseries for its release as a trade paperback collection.

Drawn by Andres Ponce and Ian Richardson, **Distant Relatives** – the 2003 four-parter that continued Faerber's superhero family saga – was initially published in black and white. Image's 120-page compilation will feature it in colour as originally intended.

The softcover ships on December 22 and includes a previously unpublished six-page strip by Faerber and artist Valentine De Landro, which the writer originally contributed to a subsequently aborted anthology.

news... people in the news... people in

Marvel Enterprises – Publishing Division.

CAPTAIN America and the Falcon's ***Joe Bennett*** has signed exclusively to DC for two years.

The Brazilian artist becomes regular **Hawkman** penciller with #35, which ships on December 15.

A NEW arrival at Top Cow is ***Annie Pham***, who is taking over responsibility for the company's public relations plus marketing and direct sales.

She replaces the long-departed Frank Mastromauro, who left Top Cow in early 2003 to help Michael Turner establish Aspen Entertainment.

MARVEL's vice chairman and largest stockholder has been named Chief Executive Officer.

Isaac Perlmutter is to replace Alan Lipson with effect from January 1.

DAN DIDIO has been promoted to vice president – executive editor, DC Universe. He joined DC Comics as vice president – editorial in January 2002.

round up... news round up... news round up... news round up... news round up... news

PAGE 45

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Wolverine solo project continues latest trend in cinematic superheroes

Mike Conroy's Frame to Frame

Charting the latest interaction between films and comics

IT LOOKS like we may be seeing the beginnings of a new trend in comicbook movies of the superhero kind. It's early days yet and it's not started well but there's definitely a concerted move towards establishing characters in a major movie before attempting to spin them off as a headline act in their own right.

The spin-off idea has been around since 1992 when a *Catwoman* movie was put into development, sparked by Michelle Pfeiffer's appearance as the feline fatale in *Batman Returns*.

That it took 12 years to get Halle Berry into the catsuit for this year's execrable and misconceived film possibly says as much about the movie industry as it does about the appetite Hollywood now has for comicbook flicks.

Interestingly, the second into-production movie in this developing trend also features a female lead, which suggests that maybe – just maybe – Hollywood is beginning to see women as capable of headlining an action movie.

There haven't been that many with a female star: *Cutthroat Island*, *The Long Kiss Goodnight*, *Charlie's Angels* and its sequel *Full Throttle* are among the few and the first two of them starred the director's wife.

But to get back to the main plot, Jennifer Garner is reprising her *Daredevil* role in *Elektra*, which opens in America on January 14.

It's a strange move, bringing the feisty sai-wielding martial artist back from the dead to start her own franchise particularly when the original film's box office performance – while not poor by any means – didn't exactly set the world on fire.

With talk of *Daredevil II* more 'Will they/won't they?' than 'They are!' it will be interesting to see how Ms Natchios fares on her own.

Maybe she will kick off another trend – for superhero women. And if that happens will that long-talked of *Wonder Woman* flick be far behind?

But it's Lauren Shuler-Donner's move on Hugh Jackman that might really turn the nascent trend into a movement.

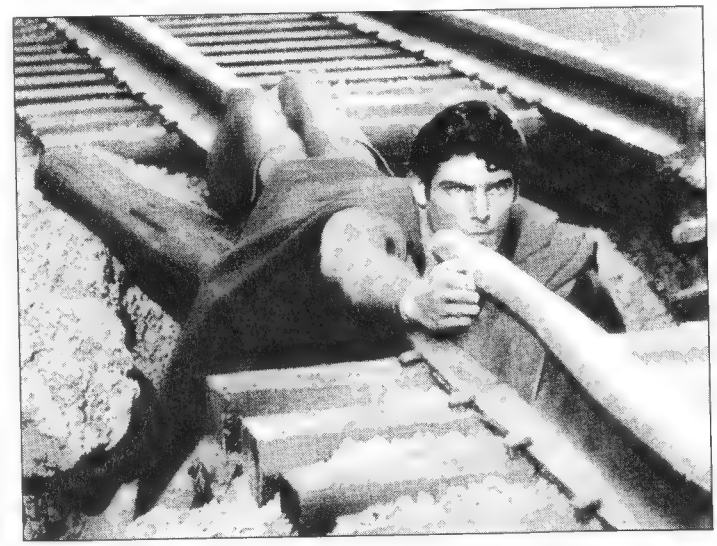
The *X-Men* producer is looking to sign the actor to reprise his Wolverine role in a solo movie that is to follow the still-in-development *X-3*.

That Jackman has yet to commit to that third *X-Men* movie doesn't appear to have dented the producer's confidence. She and 20th Century Fox have already got *Troy*'s David Benioff writing the screenplay, which, reportedly, will also feature another refugee from the *X-Men* films – Anna Paquin's Rogue.

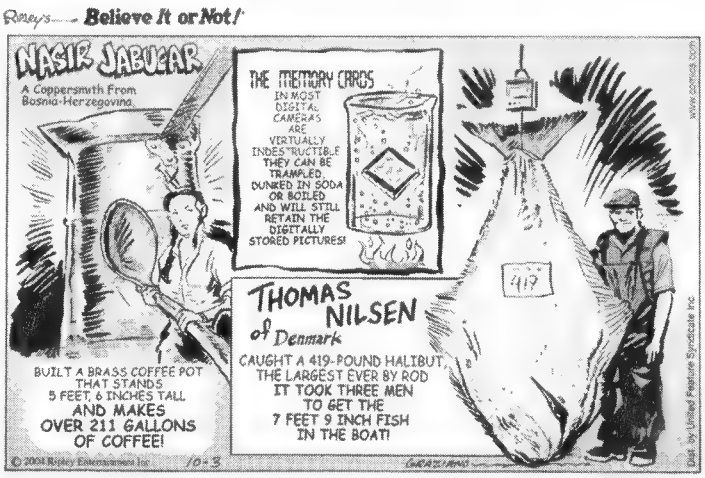
Dark Phoenix Saga

Before leaving Marvel's mutants, it's worth noting that *X-3* is to be a version of the *Dark Phoenix Saga*. Simon Kinberg is now on board to write the script while *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* creator Joss Whedon has announced he is not directing the movie, which is scheduled to premiere in the US on May 5, 2006.

For what its worth, Kinberg has penned rewrites of *Fantastic Four* and *Elektra*. He also wrote *Mr and Mrs Smith*, the forthcoming Brad Pitt/Angelina Jolie vehicle.



Above: Christopher Reeve recreates a classic comicbook moment in a scene from 1978's Superman *movie. The actor, who passed away on October 10 at the age of 52, will be remembered not only as the Man of Steel – a role he also played in three sequels – but also for his heroic and inspirational battle against the almost total paralysis he suffered as the result of a near-fatal horse riding accident in 1995.*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419
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Above: A recent Ripley's Believe It or Not *cartoon. The founder of the franchise – which spawned a museum chain and TV shows as well as the newspaper strip and several comicbooks, including a long-running Gold Key series – is to be the focus of the first in a proposed series of adventure movies. "It's about the exploits of Robert Ripley, one of the most popular newspaper cartoonists in the '30s and '40s, who was well known for going around the world and looking for oddities and getting into adventures while doing so," said Jim Jacks, who is producing the project with his Alphaville partners Sean Daniels and Ken Atchity. "We want to make a series of movies that, if not quite the truth, are the adventures that should have happened."* Screwed*'s Larry Karaszewski and Scott Alexander are on board to script.*

Three movies do not a trend make but there's at least one more spin-off waiting in the wings.

There's talk of a *Nightstalkers* movie featuring Marvel's ex-vampire turned private eye, Hannibal King and Abigail Whistler, whose father is the Kris Kristofferson character from the *Blade* movies.

No more Blade?

The two youngsters – played by Ryan Reynolds and Jessica Biel – have been given so much screen time in *Blade: Trinity* – which hits screens in the US on December 8 – that Wesley Snipes wrote a letter of complaint to New Line Cinema's co-chairman and founder, Bob Shaye.

The star's missive ran to five pages so it wasn't his only grumble about his treatment but, on that point, he remarked, "As I recall, the movies are titled *Blade* and Wesley Snipes is the actor/artist that brought the comicbook charac-ter to life."

It probably doesn't help Snipes to have that wanted feeling with him knowing that writer/director David Goyer has apparently shot three different endings for *Trinity* and that one of them doesn't leave much possibility of a fourth *Blade* flick.

As for the spin-off trend, it'll be interesting to see who might be next. Anyone want odds on the Human Torch or the Thing? Or is there someone less well-known standing in the wings, waiting for their chance in the spotlight?

No more Spider-Man?

While some studios are looking to spin-offs as a way of extending their superhero franchises beyond mere sequels, Columbia Pictures seems to be taking an altogether different line.

According to director Sam Raimi, studio head Amy Pascal wants to call a halt to the *Spider-Man* saga after the third web-slinging movie.

Above: ***Samurai Girl: Real Bout High School*** *art by Sora Inoue. Left: Wolverine does what he does best as depicted by John Byrne circa 1980.*

Discussing that second sequel, he said, "One thing that Amy Pascal told me was that she wants to make this a proper ending to the *Spider-Man* saga. I'd like to keep directing *Spider-Man* movies but I think she's thinking that the audience feels they want to see one more and no more. They want to have a proper ending to the story now.

"So I think maybe she's right, and so I'm approaching it under her guidance and that's how I'm trying to think of this film as the end," the director added.

With that attitude, it's lucky Pascal wasn't an early James Bond producer!

Clueless Tiger

No longer attached to *Sabrina the Teenage Witch*, Melissa Joan Hart is turning her attention to manga.

In conjunction with Tokyopop and through her Hartbreak Films, she's looking to make a live-action version of Reiji Saiga and Sora Inoue's **Samurai Girl: Real Bout High School**. The movie is written by *Wyatt Earp*'s Dan Gordon, who describes it as "a delicious action/comedy mix of *Clueless* meets *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*."

Frame to Frame Review

Pixar delivers superhero fun

TOY STORY, *A Bug's Life*, *Toy Story 2*, *Monsters Inc*, *Finding Nemo* and now *The Incredibles* makes it six in a row for Pixar.

This latest hit from the computer animation studio has everything you would expect from a superhero comedy but the laughs come from a love of the genre not from spite.

The Incredibles is not a parody but a celebration of superhero comics. It may not charm youngsters in the same way its predecessors have done – much of the laughter at the in-jokes during the preview screening came from adults not the many children in attendance – but it doesn't lose that audience. Kids will love it as a fun action/adventure flick... just like their parents.

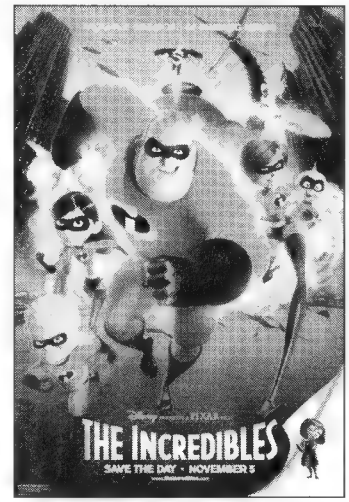
A major superhero and a media star, Mr Incredible has his own thoughts on the job he does. "No matter how many times you save the world, it always manages to get back in jeopardy again! I feel like the maid; 'I just cleaned up this place! Can't you keep it clean for 10 minutes!" he states early on in the movie, which is set on a world where superheroes are forced into retirement by one too many lawsuits, like the one by the would-be suicide who sued because he didn't want saving.

Now living an anonymous and normal life in a government witness protection programme, Bob Parr – aka Mr Incredible – is bored, overweight and out of condition. His humdrum existence revolves around his thankless job as an insurance clerk. He still craves excitement and spends one night a week out with his friend Frozone seeking it.

Such is his life, he tells his wife he's going bowling so she doesn't suspect that he's jeopardising their cover.

Meet the family

Finally a call comes that offers him the opportunity to get back in the costume and tackle menaces again. Unfortunately, it also forces the entire Parr family to follow him, revealing their powers as they rush off to combat a mysterious menace.



Above: The entire Incredibles family is featured on the promo poster for the latest animated blockbuster from Disney/Pixar. Pictured from left to right are Dash, Violet, Mr Incredible, Elastigirl and baby Jack Jack. Behind them are the sinister Syndrome and Mr Incredible's ally, Frozone while Edna Mode, couturier to the superhero community, peeks out at the front. Below: Time for your close-up, Mr Incredible.

Not only is Mrs Parr the former Elastigirl (and DC don't seem to mind) but the kids have superhuman abilities of their own. Violet, the eldest, has powers akin to Invisible Girl's while her brother, the aptly-named Dash, is super-fast. And just wait until you see what Jack Jack, the baby, can do.

Diminutive designer

All the superhero conventions are covered up to and including the reasons why the villain, Syndrome, has turned evil.

But if there's one character that is a real delight it's Edna Mode. This diminutive designer of superhero costumes – voiced by director/writer Brad Bird – will make you forget all about Paul Gambi, tailor to the Flash's Rogues Gallery.

All in all *The Incredibles* is fun all the way.

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Talking Shop with Stephen Holland

Reminding people there's a real mainstream out there

CHRISTMAS presents for those who don't already read comics – that was the subject of last month's column, and I'm very much hoping that you've already written in with success stories of your own, or will do in time for December. In the meantime here are some more of my own, starting (improbably enough) with **Ultimates**.

"Hold on, this guy normally argues that superheroes *aren't* truly mainstream." True, but this – to my mind – is an exception. It's that big budget action movie which flies straight to the top of the film charts, without all the dumbing-down that generally goes with it. It's pithy, it's witty, it's socially relevant *and* Bryan Hitch's art eclipses most known cinematic effects. Gone are the garish spandex and improbable altruism, replaced by functional kevlar, bloody big pay cheques, fucked-up relationships and rounded (if split) personalities. You can safely buy this for most of your male mates, and I pretty much have.

It boasts the same attitude-on-a-stick which has made **Preacher** so successful here, as does **Global Frequency**, a covert organisation of 1001 operatives specialising in a diverse range of esoteric disciplines from nuclear fission to languages, tracking, and *le parkour* running. Different threats require different tactics and different combinations of skills, so when Miranda Zero makes her selection, you'd better pray she gets it right, because when the phone call comes you probably have less time to save the world than you do to get your pants back on. Spiked with sharp sci-fi, each short story feels like an hour-long blockbuster compressed into five blistering minutes of desperate, cellular reconnaissance and frenetic, on-the-ground countermeasures.

Remove the testosterone from any of the above, and you're still left with that most appealing of qualities, humour. Which brings me to **Kyle Baker, Cartoonist**. The first half of each book boasts one-off cartoons that are damnably clever (anyone on the receiving end of spam is going to enjoy the doctor joke where a male patient with enormous L-cup breasts is told: "My advice is, stop answering your e-mail"); the second features Baker's own hugely endearing family, radiates affection and will have any parent smiling (or weeping) with recognition at his children's antics. And the man knows what he's doing: "Liz [his wife] once asked me why I drew myself so fat. I explained that fat is funny. Daughter Lil asked me why I draw Mommy so skinny. I explained it's because Daddy's no fool."

I've also given copies of Kyle's **Why I Hate Saturn**. It's all in the dialogue, much of it set in bars, and if you're a Bendis fan (like me), you'll lap it up yourself before buying it for friends.

Although the obvious Alan Moore is **League of Extra-ordinary Gentlemen**, I'm going with **Tomorrow Stories**, particularly at this time of the year because it's *just* like the old children's annuals we were given for Christmas, only for adults: a series of recurring characters, in short comedy sketches.

> **The Wolves in the Wall**: Gaiman knows a child's heart, so he plays with logic and nonsense and lore

The topics up for ridicule range from daytime, confessional talk shows to '80s dancing, but the best pieces usually involve Jack B. Quick, the hyper-active, farmstead child prodigy who invents overly complex scientific solutions to simple dairy problems, with catastrophic results for the entire space-time continuum (or at least the small population of Queerwater Creek).

Similarly, **Halo & Sprocket** is a big bag of fun, looking at how ludicrously we live our lives, treat our pets, consider art, and market our goods. On the panel: a sprightly young lady, a socially inexperienced robot and an impetuous angel. Consider infinity, things in miniature, and how to apologise in sign language to a driver you've just cut up, without making things worse.

Bone is going to be in colour next year, so you might want to hold off when it comes to kids, and go instead for Gaiman & McKean's **The Wolves In The Wall**. Gaiman knows a child's heart, so he plays with logic and nonsense and lore. Told in sequences of four, Lucy and her pig-puppet are convinced there are wolves in the wall. It's a notion denied by her mother, dismissed by her father, and laughed at by her brother. But when the wolves do break free it's a stunning spread of frenzied penline, like an electrified Gerald Scarfe, and they're the coolest wolves I've ever seen.

There's also a new edition (complete with CD) of **The Day I Swapped My Dad For Two Goldfish**. A mother comes home to find her son has swapped his Dad for two goldfish. She isn't best pleased. So she sends the young man and his pestering sister back to his mate Nathan's house to retrieve their father, only to find that Nathan's already swapped him for a guitar. Indeed retrieving Dad turns into a succession of "just too lates" because *no* one wants to hang on to him. "Well, he wasn't very exciting. All he did was read the paper."

This is the first children's book that should have a "Parental Guidance" sticker slapped on it. As a description that is, rather than a warning.

Returning to adults, if someone does have a history of rubbish males in their family – and I don't mean dustmen, I mean tragically useless fathers – they might appreciate the comfort of seeing worse. In **Jimmy Corrigan**, four generations of men grow increasingly dysfunctional as the emotional damage accumulates through acts of carelessness, callousness or petty cruelty, culminating in the traumatised mouse of a man that *is* Jimmy Corrigan. You begin with Jimmy avoiding the world, then gradually discover where he came from.

Nobody can manipulate the artform like Ware, and for all I know Minutiae is his middle name.

He also has a self-deprecating sense of humour shown by his inclusion of a host of quotations endorsing the book… and four sentences of blinkered **Late Show** ignorance from Tom even-my-mother-is-probably-disappointed-in-me-by-now Paulin.

With comicbook bigots like him in the media, I guess it's up to us to spread the good word and prove him wrong.

Stephen Holland runs Page 45 in Nottingham with Mark Simpson & Tom Rosin. Tom Paulin used to be one of Stephen's lecturers. <Sigh>

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Compiled by Jim Hannah

The following are 32 page colour titles unless stated

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Dark Horse

B.P.R.D.: The Dead 2 (of 5; Mike Mignola & John Arcudi + Guy Davis) Mysterious shrines are appearing across the Midwest. But before the Bureau for Paranormal Research and Defense can pursue this threat, Johann is overcome by a presence lurking deep beneath the new B.P.R.D. headquarters. $2.99

Hellsing Vol 5 (Kohta Hirano; tpbk) The emerging Millennium Project, an army of Nazi undead, is unleashed upon the world. What will surely ensue is a war of blood and nostalgia, with a coolly gothic style and increasingly frenetic pace. Mature readers. 208pg b&w $9.95

one-shot **Karas** (Phil Amara & Núria Peris) Japan is under seige by strange mechanical monsters led by a sinister ex-hero named Eko. Though the future looks bleak, all is not lost. There is a young hero chosen by the Landlord Yuri to fight against the phantoms that plague Japan. He is KARAS, a powerful armoured being appointed to defend the innocent. $2.99

one-shot **Kingdom of the Wicked** (Ian Edginton & D'Israeli; tpbk) Stricken by mysterious headaches and blackouts that plagued his childhood, *nouveau riche* author Chris finds himself walking the avenues and boulevards of Castrovalva – the fantasy realm he dreamt up as a boy, to while away his recuperation. 120pg $15.95

Samurai: Heaven and Earth 1 (of 5; Ron Marz & Luke Ross + Jason Keith) Following a lone samurai warrior sworn to be reunited with the love of his life who has been spirited away by his enemies. $2.99

Star Wars: Empire 28 *(Payment in Full* 1 of 1; Ron Marz & Adriana Melo + Michael Atiyeh) Boba Fett is on a mission. But this time his objective is not a person, but a thing: a holo-projector containing an irreplaceable recording. $2.99

DC Comics

new **Deadshot** 1 (of 5; Christos N. Gage & Steven Cummings + Jimmy Palmiotti) Deadshot, an expert marksman and cold, efficient killer, believes he has no reason to live, until he learns he has a daughter! $2.95

Detective Comics 801 *(City of Crime* 1 of 12; David Lapham + Mike Carey & Ramon Bachs) As the Dark Knight tries to shut down a drug ring that's turned deadly, Bruce Wayne must contend with a wayward 14-year old who's getting dangerously close to Gotham's underworld. 40pg $2.95

Fallen Angel 18 (Peter David & David Lopez + Fernando Blanco) Lee has fought and fought to be the master of her own destiny, but no matter how hard she's fought, her freedom's been in other people's hands. Mature readers. $2.95

Firestorm 8 (Dan Jolley & Jamal Igle + Rob Stull) Jason Rusch faces turmoil from without and within, as his father gives him the harshest of ultimatums. But when Jason tries to help someone in need, he discovers that no good deed goes unpunished. $2.50

Hard Time 11 (Steve Gerber & Brian Hurtt) Inside or outside State Penitentiary, it's all about survival, as a cellblock vendetta follows an inmate's loved ones home. $2.50

The Intimates 2 (Joe Casey & Giuseppe Camuncoli + Sandra Hope; *WildStorm)* Adolescent angst can be a lot to swallow, and the average teenaged superhero must learn to cope. As for life outside the Seminary walls, Punchy and Duke are determined to experience some of it. $2.95

one-shot **JLA: Another Nail** (Alan Davis & Davis + Mark Farmer; tpbk) *See Close-Up, below.*

Justice League Unlimited 4 (Adam Beechen & Carlo Barberi + Walden Wong) When a young boy on the planet Rann wonders why his world doesn't have its own heroes, Adam Strange must show him what it means to be a hero. $2.25

Looney Tunes 121 (various) Pepe Le Pew stinks up outer space, Witch Hazel is betrayed by her broom, and Porky goes shopping at Daffy's, where the customer is almost always right... ..... $2.25

MAD 449 (The Usual Gang of Idiots) Further adventures in the seasonal stylee from the Mad Jacks of MAD. 48pg $3.50

The Monolith 11 (Jimmy Palmiotti & Justin Gray + Phil Winslade) Alice goes missing after she investigates a women's safehouse. The Monolith and Tilt rip through Brooklyn in a quest to find her, and end up on the wrong side of the law. $2.95

The Question 2 (of 6; Rick Veitch & Tommy Lee Edwards) While Lex Luthor unveils plans for his beloved city, The Question stalks the streets searching for answers. $2.95

one-shot **Robo-Hunter: Verdus** (John Wagner & Ian Gibson + José Luis Ferrer; tpbk) Sam Slade takes on the biggest case of his life. Verdus was a paradise planet. But all contact with the colony has since been lost. It must be re-established. 36pg b&w $14.95

Swamp Thing 10 *(Love in Vain* 2 of 4; Joshua Dysart & Enrique Breccia; *Vertigo)* Arcane and his demon-lover consummate their relationship, spreading a terrible infection through the Green and into the swamp. Mature readers. $2.95

Toe Tags Featuring George Romero 3 (George Romero & Tommy Castillo + Rodney Ramos) The power elite keeps a stranglehold on the world's riches while an army of dead scourge the countryside. Mature readers. $2.95

Y: The Last Man 29 *(Ring of Truth* 3 of 5; Brian K. Vaughan & Pia Guerra & José Marzan Jr; *Vertigo)* With Yorick near death and Dr Mann frantically trying to save him, Agent 355 meets with the fearsome Setauket Ring and Yorick's sister Hero in a desperate attempt to get Yorick's engagement ring back. Mature readers. $2.95

Marvel

Alpha Flight 10 *(Days of Future Present, Past Participle* 2 of 4; Scott Lobdell & Clayton Henry) Alpha Flight's foray into the time-stream has only made things worse, and it is up to Centennial to set things right. $2.99

one-shot **Avengers Disassembled: Thor** (Mike Avon Oeming & Andrea Divito; tpbk) Ragnarok appears to have come for the gods of Asgard, and only Thor and his Avengers allies might be able to stave off that fate. Collects Thor #80-85. 144pg $14.99

Captain America & The Falcon 10 *(Brothers & Keepers (Adelphoite Phylaxes)* 3 of 5; Christopher Priest & Joe Bennett) The Falcon's increasingly erratic behaviour has created sharp conflict between Captain America and himself. $2.99

Exiles 55 *(Bump in the Night* 1 of 3; Tony Bedard & James Calafiore) The Exiles enter into a world of swords and sorcery. $2.99

Hulk & Thing: Hard Knocks 4 (Bruce Jones & Jae Lee) Think you know everything about the unique relationship between this pair? Marvel has just invented some more! ... $3.50

Jubilee 4 (Robert Kirkman & Derec Donovan) Further adventures of Jubilee, finally in her own series. $2.99

Marvel Age Spider-Man 17 (Todd Dezago + Stan Lee + Steve Ditko & Logan Lubera) Following Spidey's hasty exit from a battle with the Green Goblin, J. Jonah Jameson has all of New York wondering if our favourite Web-Slinger has given up. $2.25

Marvel Team-Up 3 (Robert Kirkman & Scott Kolins) Something odd's happening, and Reed Richards doesn't know what to do. Luckily, Doctor Strange is able to lend a helping hand, or spell or two. $2.25

Sabretooth 4 (Daniel Way & Bart Sears) The mystery of who – or what – massacred the innocent civilians living on the Isle Dupree is revealed. .. $2.99

Spectacular Spider-Man Vol 4: Disassembled (Paul Jenkins & Michael Ryan & Humberto Ramos; tpbk) Spider-Man's life is thrown into turmoil as he begins to undergo a shocking transformation. Collects Spectacular Spider-Man #15-20. 144pg $14.99

Spider-Girl 81 (Tom DeFalco & Ron Frenz) When his daughter's crime spree leads to another confrontation with Spider-Girl, Electro comes out of retirement to seek the help of his old enemy Spider-Man. $2.99

Strange 3 (of 6; J. Michael Straczynski & Samm Barnes + Brandon Peterson) Brash young surgeon Dr Stephen Strange is on a collision course with destiny – a journey that will force him to search the deepest corners of his own heart and the outer reaches of the cosmos. $3.50

Tomb of Dracula 3 (of 6; Rob Rodi & Jamie Tolagson) As Dracula undergoes a violent physical transformation that might result in the extermination of the human race, Blade and his team of vampire hunters race toward Castle Dracula only to find themselves under assault by the first wave of alpha-vampires who are sworn to protect their master. $2.99

new **Ultimates 2** #1 (of 5; Mark Millar & Bryan Hitch) It's been one year since the Ultimates stopped an alien invasion, and now things get hard. New members, new costumes and 12 months of gossip to catch up on! $2.99

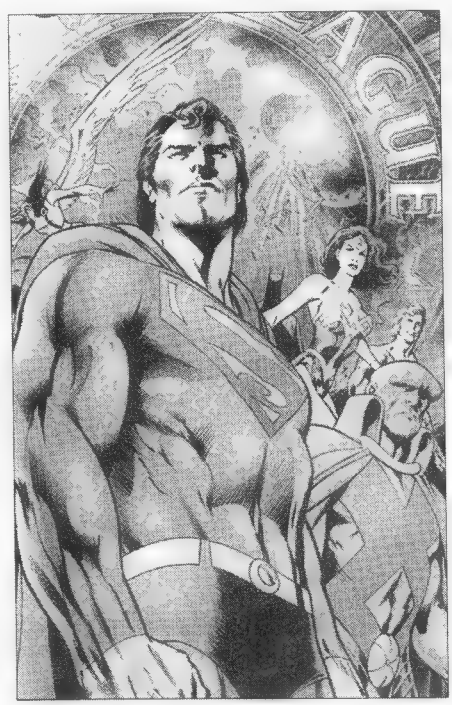
Ultimate Nightmare 5 (of 5; Warren Ellis & Trevor Hairsine + Jimmy Cheung) The Ultimates take on Ultimate X-Men in the wastes of Tunguska. $2.25

Uncanny X-Men 453 *(Chasing Hellfire* 2 of 3; Chris Claremont & Andy Park) The X-Men, hot on the trail of Sage, find themselves in the sewers of Paris. But who's really hunting whom? $2.25

one-shot **Uncanny X-Men: The New Age Vol 1: The End of History** (Chris Claremont & Alan Davis; tpbk) New alliances are forged as old friendships are rekindled, but one thing is certain: The X-Men will never be the same! Collecting Uncanny X-Men #444-449. 144pg $12.99

new **X-Men/Fantastic Four** 1 (of 5; Akira Yoshida & Pat Lee) Can the X-Men and the Fantastic Four put their differences aside to stop a creeping menace from outer space that threatens our planet's very existence? $3.50

X-Men Unlimited 6 (Tony Bedard + Paul Benson & Paul Pelletier + Alex Sanchez) A tale of some of the X-women's worst dating experiences, while relate Rogue's encounter with a soul not unlike herself. $2.99



close-up

JLA: Another Nail

DC Comics

Writer: Alan Davis

Artists: Davis + Mark Farmer

Collects the three-issue miniseries. In the outer reaches of space, a cosmic war between the New Gods has set events in motion that may change Earth and the entire universe forever. Can the JLA come to terms with their newest recruit – Superman – as a sprawling adventure unfolds? This time, the battle takes them to other worlds, other dimensions, other eras and even the realms that lead to Hell itself. 160pg $12.95

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Blade of the Immortal 96: Twilight 1 (of 3; Hiroaki Samura) Trying to

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Incredible Hulk #110-400
Fantastic Four (1st series) #1-400
Journey into Mystery #83-125
Batman #150-300
Justice League of America (1stseries) #1-261
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recover from a Mugai-ryü ambush, Anotsu assembles a colourful group, his finest surviving Itto-ryü warriors, to re-affirm loyalties and focus their anger. Mature readers. b&w $2.99

Bmwfilms.com's The Hire 3 (of 6; Mark Waid & Claude St. Aubin + Wil Glass) The Driver's passenger is a nobody, lower echelon bureaucrat. There's no reason anyone would want to kidnap the guy. So why are he and the Driver being pursued by thugs in semi-trucks and helicopters? $2.99

Samurai Executioner Vol 3 (Kazuo Koike & Goseki Kojima; tpbk) Witness a duel between two great samurai, in the slow, contemplative tradition. Observe Asa's extremely precise sword stroke. And read a story of a young peace officer who practices the use of his specialised weaponry to the point of utilitarian, life-saving perfection. Mature readers. 312pg b&w $9.95

Star Wars: Obsession 2 (of 5; Haden Blackman & Brian Ching) Consumed by the belief that the dark Jedi Asajj Ventress still lives, Obi-Wan Kenobi has temporarily forsaken the Clone Wars and recruited Anakin Skywalker in his desperate hunt for Ventress. $2.99

DC Comics

100 Bullets 56 *(Wylie Runs the Voodoo Down* 6 of 6; Brian Azzarello & Eduardo Risso; *Vertigo)* Will the slacker-turned-Minuteman be able to walk away in one piece, or is this the end of the line for yet another player? Mature readers. $2.50

Action Comics 822 (Chuck Austen & Ivan Reis + Marc Campos) Clark and Lois go back to Smallville for the holidays hoping to escape the hustle and bustle of Metropolis. There's just one problem: Lana Lang is in town, too! $2.50

one-shot **Adventures in the Rifle Brigade** (Garth Ennis & Carlos Ezquerra; ; *Vertigo;* tpbk) Collects the miniseries Adventures in the Rifle Brigade and its sequel, Operation Bollock. Mature readers. 144pg $14.95

Angeltown 2 (of 5; Gary Phillips & Shawn Martinbrough; *Vertigo)* The mystery thickens as bounty hunters, crooked cops and mobsters continue the hunt for a pro basketball player accused of murder. Mature readers. $2.95

Aquaman 25 (John Arcudi & Patrick Gleason + Christian Alamy) The citizens of Sub Diego are coping with their loss in all too familiar – and all too deadly – ways. And while they adapt to their less and less alien environment, the bigger question is, can Aquaman adapt as well? $2.50

one-shot **Batman / Danger Girl** (Andy Hartnell & Leinil Yu + Gerry Alanguilan; *WildStorm)* Danger Girl mentor Deuce dispatches Abbey Chase, Sydney Savage, Johnny Barracuda and Valerie on an assignment in Gotham City, home base of Batman! Variant cover. 48pg $4.95

one-shot **The Batman Jam-Packed Action** (various) Adapts the first two episodes of Cartoon Network's animated series The Batman. 96pg $7.99

Batman: Legends of the Dark Knight 186 *(Riddle Me That* 2 of 5; Shane McCarthy & Tommy Castillo + Rodney Ramos) There's an all-new Riddler wreaking havoc on the streets of Gotham – and he's three steps ahead of the Bat. $2.50

The Batman Strikes! 4 (Bill Matheny & Christopher Jones + Terry Beatty) The young Dark Knight faces a foe who's twice his size with the wiles of 10 men: the mighty Bane. $2.25

Bloodhound 6 (Dan Jolley & Leonard Kirk + Robin Riggs) There's a new warden in town with a dislike for Clev, and a psychic who doesn't like the hound either. $2.95

Fables 32 (Bill Willingham & Mark Buckingham + Steve Leialoha; *Vertigo)* Prince Charming discovers that keeping campaign promises is a lot harder than making them. Mature readers... $2.50

one-shot **Global Frequency: Detonation Radio** (Warren Ellis & various; *WildStorm;* tpbk) Includes issues #7-12 of the maxiseries. From the streets of Los Angeles to the sewers below New York City, Global Frequency is always watching. Mature readers. 144pg $14.95

Gotham Central 26 (Greg Rucka & Jason Alexander) Josie Mac and Driver investigate the murder of a famous televangelist. $2.50

Green Arrow 45 (Judd Winick & Phil Hester + Ande Parks) Ollie faces off against the murderous crime kingpin Brick – and the fate of Star City hangs in the balance. $2.50

JLA 109 *(Crime Syndicate of Amerika* 3 of 8; Kurt Busiek & Ron Garney + Dan Green) The Crime Syndicate of Amerika invades Earth and make itself at home, robbing, pillaging and causing general unrest. $2.25

JSA 68 *(JSA/JSA* 1 of 5; Geoff Johns & Don Kramer & Keith Champagne) In 1951, the JSA disbanded due to pressure from the House Un-American Activities Committee. They were destined to re-form and continue their fight for justice...that is, until now! Something has changed history, and the JSA will never be heard of again. $2.50

Nightwing 100 (Devin Grayson & Mike Lilly + Andy Owens) With the events of *War Games* behind him, Nightwing must find an inner focus that has eluded him and mete out justice – and it all begins with Tarantula. 40pg $2.95

Scooby-Doo 91 (various) Can the gang subdue a spirit who's also a legend of Hong Kong cinema? $2.25

one-shot **Shimura** (various; tpbk) Determined to stop the organised Yakuza crime syndicates, Judge-Inspector Shimura fights corruption and crime wherever he can find it, with the help of Aiko Inaba, a rare female Judge trainee in a world that ignores women. Mature readers. 224pg $19.95

Tom Strong 30 (Ed Brubaker & Duncan Fegredo; *America's Best Comics)* One day Tom wakes up to discover he's a middle-aged man in a loveless marriage, working at a meaningless job. $2.95

Wild Girl 2 (Leah Moore & John Reppion + Shawn McManus; *America's Best Comics)* Rosa makes a new friend, Hylax, in whom she trusts and confides completely – and yet she still feels uneasy around him. $2.95

Marvel

one-shot **Avengers Disassembled: Captain America** (Robert Kirkman + Christopher Priest & Scot Eaton + Joe Bennett; tpbk) Captain America and Diamondback are reunited after all these years – but their reunion is bittersweet, as Cap is consumed with remorse over recent cataclysmic events involving the Avengers. Collects Captain America #29-32 and Captain America and the Falcon #5-7. 168pg $17.99

one-shot **Avengers Disassembled: Iron Man** (Mark Ricketts + John Jackson Miller & Tony Harris + Jorge Lucas; tpbk) Tony Stark's self-imposed exile is cut short, as Iron Man must face off against his evil doppelganger, which has embarked on a murderous rampage aimed at those in charge of Stark Enterprises! Collects Iron Man #84-89. 144pg $14.99

Bullseye: Greatest Hits 4 (of 5; Daniel Way & Steve Dillon) Bullseye relives his crowning achievement, revealing a new wrinkle in his tumultuous relationship with a certain female assassin. . $2.99

District X #8 *(Underground* 2 of 6; David Hine & Lan Medina) As the mystery of the creature underneath the streets deepens, a more personal matter threatens Bishop and Ismael's friendship. $2.99

Emma Frost 18 *(Bloom* 6 of 6; Karl Bollers & Carlo Pagulayan) With the love of her life on trial for his job, what is Emma willing to do to save him? $2.99

Gambit 5 (House of Cards 5 of 6; John Layman & Georges Jeanty) What Gambit expected to be an easy job for fun and profit has taken a tragic turn for the worse. $2.99

Marvel Age Hulk 4 (Mike Raicht & Ryan Odagawa) Someone is framing the Hulk for destruction in Texas, and there's only one other big green monster that could fit the bill! $1.75

one-shot **Marvel Holiday Special** (various; tpbk) Holiday special featuring three brand-new stories, including a version of *A Christmas Carol* starring Spider-Man. 144pg $15.99

Marvel Knights 4 #13 *(Eyes Without A Face* 1 of 2; Roberto Aguirre-Sacasa & Jim Muinez) It's good news all around – not just for the FF, who have reclaimed their status as New York's premiere superhero team – but for their friend and ally Alicia Masters. After a lifetime of darkness, the blind sculptress's eyesight has been restored by her father Philip Masters – the seemingly reformed villain Puppet Master – but at what cost? $3.50

Marvel Knights Spider-Man 9 *(The Last Stand* 1 of 4; Mark Millar & Terry Dodson) The identity of Aunt May's abductor is finally revealed. But is that the villain who really pulls the strings? $2.99

one-shot **New Avengers 1 Director's Cut** (Brian Michael Bendis & David Finch) Previously unseen artwork by David Finch and a special look at the scripts of Brian Michael Bendis. 48pg $3.99

Powers 7 (Brian Michael Bendis & Michael Avon Oeming; *Icon Comics)* One of the great defenders of the city's dark streets has been murdered by a cop. And how does this affect the burgeoning career of the new Retro Girl? Mature readers. $2.95

Punisher 15 *(Mother Russia* 3 of 6; Garth Ennis & Doug Braithwaite; *Max Comics)* Frank Castle cuts a bloody swath through Russia, where a lot of bad men need to be punished. Mature readers. $2.99

She-Hulk 10 *(Titania* 1 of 3; Dan Slott & Juan Bobillo) Out of all of She-Hulk's enemies, no one hates her more than Titania! So where did all this hostility come from? $2.99

Spectacular Spider-Man 22 (Paul Jenkins & Talent Caldwell) How can Peter Parker help his one-time foe – the Mindworm – and is Spidey himself responsible for his pitiable condition? $2.25

Stoker's Dracula 2 (of 4; Roy Thomas & Dick Giordano) The horror continues apace as Dracula makes his way to England and sets his sights on Lucy Westenra and Mina Harker. b&w 48pg $3.99

Illuminations

Highlights from December's releases

Selected by Martin "Biff" Averre

Dark Horse is renowned for its licensed comics and manga reprints, but over the years it has published many groundbreaking titles. One of its earliest classics was Paul Chadwick's **Concrete**, winner of six Eisner and three Harvey awards. Now, after a break of many years, and 17 since its debut, Concrete returns with **Concrete: The Human Dilemma** #1 of 6. Concrete is an immense alien rock-like body into which Ron Lithgow's brain was transplanted for reasons never explained. From this bizarre premise have come stories that look at political and social issues in a seriously realistic and thought-provoking manner. The subject this time is population control. Don't overlook this one. **Sales 5/5 Quality 5/5**

I fondly remember the Legion of Super-Heroes from **Superboy** #233 to 258 (although not their first appearance in **Adventure Comics** #247) and then **Legion of Super-Heroes** #259-313. There have been many incarnations and variations since, but none quite touched those halcyon stories. Now DC has produced another relaunch which actually stands a great chance of recapturing that bygone feeling of romance and thrills. Artist Barry Kitson has put his heart and soul into this current restyling and has a great knowledge of the characters which, added to Mark Waid's creative skill and characterisation, will ensure a great relaunch that both fans and retailers would be fools to overlook. **The Legion of Super-Heroes** will definitely be DC's Christmas smash hit. **Sales 5/5 Quality 5/5**

Mark Waid is the scripter on Image/Top Cow's top release this month, **Hunter Killer** #0, which is only 25c/25p. Marc Silvestri is the artist on this 16-page black and white introduction to the regular series which can be summed up as 'the watchers of the watchmen and the policing of the police on missions blacker than black ops'. You want cheap comics? You want a cheap and excellent comic? If you don't buy a copy of this, then more fool you. **Sales 5/5 Quality 5/5**

Christmas is going to be an Ultimate season of block-buster sales. Marvel is finally releasing **Ultimates Volume 2** #1. The first volume was a runaway sales success and this second volume has Mark Millar and Bryan Hitch back in the creative saddle bringing you the Avengers as you've never seen them before, sorry, the Ultimates. People, me included, are chomping at the bit for this release so retailers please do not underorder or there will be some very sad faces over the festive season. **Sales 5/5 Quality 5/5**

To accompany the sure-fire **Ultimates** hit is another guaranteed winner, **Ultimate Secret** #1 (of 4). This miniseries introduces Captain Marvel and the Kree to the Ultimate universe. Both The Ultimates and the Ultimate Fantastic Four must find out who is trying to stop Earth's progression into space and thwart their plans. An Ultimate Captain Marvel? My dream comes true. **Sales 5/5 Quality 5/5**

What if Marvel would for once realise a good thing and not flog it to death before it has already begun. The **What If..?** series, Volume 1 (47 issues between 1977 and '85) and Volume 2 (114 issues from 1989 to '99) were always a good read and a breath of fresh air allowing a retake which didn't affect continuity. It is a series quite often requested by the fans, so Marvel decided to bring it back, BRILLIANT. Not so brilliant is the fact that there are seven issues in one month. All will be good, but not many of us will be able to afford them all in one go. For that reason my sales score is low. What if there had only been one issue..? **Sales 2/5 Quality 5/5**

With 23 years of comic retail experience as Ace Comics, Biff has also produced his ***Illuminations*** *monthly fanzine for 19 years before moving it to the web.*

Supreme Power 14 *(The Squadron* 2 of 6; J. Michael Straczynski & Gary Frank; *Max Comics)* It's high noon as Hyperion, Nighthawk and The Blur have a long-overdue showdown with the super-powered serial killer that has been terrorising the nation. Mature readers. $2.99

Thor: Son of Asgard 11 *(Worthy* 2 of 3; Akira Yoshida & Greg Tocchini) When Sif is kidnapped by Frost Giants, Odin instructs Thor to stay and guard the palace. $2.99

Ultimate Fantastic Four Vol 2: Doom (Warren Ellis & Stuart Immonen; tpbk) After a bizarre experiment unexpectedly imbued them with extraordinary powers, high-school genius Reed Richards and his fellow adventurers must learn to adapt to their amazing new situation. 144pg . $12.99

Ultimate X-Men 54 *(Longshot* 1 of 3; Brian K. Vaughan & Stuart Immonen) It's the ultimate reality show as mutants convicted of capital crimes are released on an island where they're hunted down by contestants. $2.25

Warlock 4 (Greg Pak & Charlie Adlard) Adam Warlock is the salvation of a world on the brink, but can this man-god grapple with the world's woes, or will his judgement be the end of everything? $2.99

X-Men: The End Dreamers and Demons 6 (Chris Claremont & Sean Chen) It's Pearl Harbor for the mutants as the forces arrayed against them strike from space – dealing the X-Men a mortal blow from which they may not be able to recover! $2.99

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The Goon 10 (Eric Powell) Reworking Dickens's *A Christmas Carol*, in a heart-warming tale of a dead-beat dad who always shows up late for work and won't work on Christmas to provide his invalid son with proper medical attention. $2.99

Grendel: Devil's Reign 7 (of 10; Matt Wagner & Tim Sale) With Japan annihilated by sun gun technology, Grendel-Khan Orion Assante now commands the entire planet, assisted by his elite and massive guard of Grendels. 5 ..... $3.50

DC Comics

Adventures of Superman 635 (Greg Rucka & Matthew Clark + Andy Lanning) Lupe is on the hunt for Ruin, the mysterious man behind the Man of Steel's recent troubles. $2.50

Batman: Gotham Knights 60 (A.J. Lieberman & Javier Piña + Francis Portela) Hush returns to make Batman's life a living nightmare, and this time he's got a very personal target in mind. But Hush didn't count on Batman's receiving help from one of the Dark Knight's greatest foes. $2.50

Birds of Prey 77 *(Hero Hunters* 2 of 4; Gail Simone & Ed Benes + Alex Lei) The Birds' new anti-vigilante mission pits them against the female terror Harvest who kills criminals mercilessly but is the hero of the heartland. $2.50

Catwoman 38 (Scott Morse & Paul Gulacy & Jimmy Palmiotti) Wooden Nickel is gunning for Catwoman – but why? And what will he do once he's learned her real identity? $2.50

Ex Machina 7 *(Tag* 2 of 5; Brian K. Vaughan & Tony Harris + Tom Feister; *WildStorm)* In the past, the superheroic Great Machine learns more about his strange powers from the NSA. In the present, Mayor Mitchell Hundred sends shockwaves across the country with a stunning announcement. Mature readers. $2.95

Hawkman 35 (Jimmy Palmiotti + Justin Gray & Joe Bennett + Ruy Jose) Hawkman and Hawkgirl face unspeakable horrors as a ghost ship bearing mysterious cargo arrives in the port of St. Roch, while a riot breaks out at Belle Reve prison. $2.50

Human Target 17 (Peter Milligan & Cameron Stewart; *Vertigo)* If anyone from Maggie Stains's past recognises her, she'll be dead on sight – unless Christopher Chance can help her become someone else. Mature readers. $2.95

Identity Crisis 7 (of 7; Brad Meltzer & Rags Morales + Michael Bair) For the past seven months, a new level of humanity has been brought to the DC Universe. Here's where it all comes together. Lives are saved but souls are wrecked as the story concludes. 40pg $3.95

Justice League Elite 6 (of 12; Joe Kelly & Doug Mahnke + Tom Nguyen) The Justice League Elite has gone into deep cover to infiltrate an alien street gang. But they meet other good guys – the JSA – and must stay in character as bloodthirsty menaces to keep from blowing their operation. $2.50

Lucifer 57 *(Kaluta* 2 of 2; Mike Carey & Peter Gross + Ryan Kelly; *Vertigo)* Lilith returns to claim her rightful place at the head of the Lilim with an agenda that includes summary executions and bloody rebellion. Mature readers. $2.50

Ocean 3 (of 6; Warren Ellis & Chris Sprouse + Karl Story; *WildStorm)* Doors, a multiplanetary corporation manned by modern-day indentured servants, is in orbit around Europa – and they'll do anything to gain alien weapons technology first, no matter how many lives it costs. $2.95

Plastic Man 13 (Kyle Baker) More plasticity from the mind of Harvey and Eisner award-winning Kyle Baker. $2.95

Powerpuff Girls 57 (various) The Girls face off against a house that's gone wild to escape the wrecking ball, and a villain who's freaking out for fast food. $2.25

Robin 133 *(Fresh Blood* 3 of 4; Bill Willingham & Damion Scott) Someone is making a major play to fill the power vacuum in Blüdhaven. But who? Shrike? Brutale? Or is Blockbuster somehow still pulling the strings? $2.25

one-shot **The Saga of Seven Suns: Veiled Alliances** (Kevin J. Anderson & Robert Teranishi; *WildStorm)* As the human race expands into the stars, it finds itself caught up in the politics and long-standing feuds of several powerful alien races. 96pg $17.95

one-shot **Swamp Thing: Bad Seed** (Andy Diggle & Enrique Breccia; *Vertigo;* tpbk) Reprinting issues #1-6 of the ongoing series. The Swamp Thing threatens to re-balance the natural world at the cost of countless human casualties – including his own daughter Tefé and his love, Abby. Mature readers. 144pg $9.95

Teen Titans 19 *(Titans Tomorrow* 3 of 3; Geoff Johns & Mike McKone + Marlo Alquiza) The Teen Titans continue their desperate attempt to return home 10 years in the past, where they've made a frightening decision about the future. $2.50

new **Trigger** 1 (Jason Hall & John Watkiss; *Vertigo)* In the not too distant future, 87% of America's corporations have been consolidated into one government-sanctioned corporate entity: Ethicorp. The result has allowed our country's citizens to live securely in a clean, terror-free, and productive environment. Safe. Mature readers. $2.95

The White Lama Vol 2: Road to Redemption (Alexandro Jodorowsky & Georges Bess; tpbk) Gabriel, the reincarnation of the Grand Lama, must complete his training and confront his enemies. Mature readers. 160pg $17.95

Marvel

Avengers: Earth's Mightiest 3 (of 8; Joe Casey & Scott Kolins) As Captain America struggles to reconcile his past with the present, new threats arise. $3.50

Cable/Deadpool 10 *(The Passion of the Cable* 4 of 6; Fabian Nicieza & Patrick Zircher) Deadpool holds the key to saving the world – or saving Cable's life. Which choice will he make? $2.99

Daredevil 68 *(Golden Age* 3 of 4; Brian Michael Bendis & Alex Maleev) As Matt Murdock's past catches up with him, the original Kingpin is there to deal the punishment! $2.99

Exiles 56 *(Bump in the Night* 2 of 3; Tony Bedard & James Calafiore) Guest-starring the villainy of Kulan Gath. $2.99

Fantastic Four 521 *(Galactus* 2 of 5; Mark Waid & Mike Wieringo) So far, the mystery Herald has been able to stall Galactus from sating his cosmic hunger – but that luck won't hold forever. $2.99

Fantastic Four Vol 5: Disassembled (Mark Waid + Karl Kesel & Paco Medina + Mike Wieringo; tpbk) With the Avengers in disarray, New York reluctantly turns to the disenfranchised Fantastic Four, the only heroes in town, to save them. Collects Fantastic Four #514-519. 144pg $14.99

Madrox 4 (of 5; Peter David & Pablo Raimondi) A stunning revelation about his ladylove shocks Madrox as he seeks to discover the nature of Vance's final solution for the mutant problem. $2.99

Marvel Age Fantastic Four 9 (Marc Sumerak & Alitha Martinez) The Fantastic Four face off against their most unusual foes yet – bankruptcy and reality TV. $2.25

Mystique Vol 3: Unnatural (Sean McKeever & Manuel Garcia; tpbk) When everyone's favourite shape-shifting secret agent is sent to Europe to investigate a biotech company rumoured to be using mutants as guinea pigs, she discovers a mystery far greater than anything she'd imagined! 120pg $13.99

New Invaders 5 *(Blood* 2 of 2; Allan Jacobsen & C.P. Smith) Journey into darkness with the Invaders as they storm the subterranean stronghold of the deadly Baroness Blood to save the lives of Spitfire's family. $2.99

New X-Men 8 *(Haunted* 2 of 3; Nunzio Defilippis & Christina Weir + Michael Ryan) Something beyond comprehension is happening to the children on this street, in this school of mutants. One group of kids has taken it upon themselves as a last resort to try and stop it. $2.99

one-shot **Official Handbook of the Marvel Universe: Golden Age Marvel 2004** (Ronald Byrd & Michael Hoskin) Includes in-depth bios on more than 40 of Marvel's most venerable heroes – from Angel to Yellow Claw! 48pg $3.99

Spider-Man: India 2 (Jeevan J. Kang + Suresh Seetharaman & Sharad Devarajan + Jeevan J. Kang) As Pavitr Prabhakar comes to grips with his new powers – and the murder of his Uncle Bhim – he learns a terrible piece of news that shatters his life even further. $2.99

Ultimate Spider-Man 70 (Brian Michael Bendis & Mark Bagley) In the midst of Peter's bizarre dreams and flashbacks, he goes to see the one man who might be able to help him – Dr Stephen Strange – Master of the Mystic Arts! $2.25

one-shot **What If? Classics** Vol 1 (various; tpbk) Ask yourself: What if Spider-Man joined the Fantastic Four, the Hulk had always had Bruce Banner's brain, the Avengers had never been, the Invaders had stayed together after World War Two, Captain America and Bucky had both survived World War II, or the Fantastic Four had different superpowers? 224pg $24.99

Wolverine 23 *(Enemy of the State* 4 of 6; Mark Millar & John Romita Jr + Klaus Janson) Brainwashed by the Hand, an evil Wolverine is wreaking havoc all over the country. Elektra's tracking his trail of destruction – and tracking her are a couple dozen Hand ninjas. $2.25

X-Force 5 (of 6; Fabian Nicieza & Rob Liefeld) Cable, Shatterstar and the crew make an uneasy alliance with figures from their past as Skornn strikes NYC. $2.99

X-Men 165 (Chris Claremont & Salvador Larroca) Chris Claremont and Salvador Larroca bring you a self-contained holiday blowout, X-Men style! $2.25

X-Men: Dream's End (various; tpbk) *See Close-Up, below.*

ON SALE FROM

DEC 22

Dark Horse

Conan 11 (Kurt Busiek & Cary Nord + Thomas Yeates) A Hyborean locked-room murder mystery explodes in horror and death, as Conan comes face-to-face with the inhuman machinations of the dread sorcerer Thoth-amon. $2.99

The Incredibles 2 (of 4; adaptation Brad Bird & Ricardo Curtis + Ramon Perez) Bob defeats the Omnidroid 9000 and in doing so regains some of the confidence that he had lost after going into the Superhero Relocation Program. $2.99

Jingle Belle 2 (of 4; Paul Dini & Jose Garibaldi + J. Bone) This Christmas adds a different dimension to Jingle Belle as we see her through the eyes of those who know her best, her old boyfriends. $2.99

Star Wars Tales 22 (Rob Williams & Lucas Marangon + Brandon Badeaux) Two enemy soldiers, accidentally left behind after the Battle of Endor, must survive a tribe of disgruntled Ewoks and each other. 64pg $5.99

DC Comics

new **Astro City: The Dark Age** 1 (of 12; Kurt Busiek & Brent Anderson; *WildStorm)* In the early '70s, in the wake of a global catastrophe, two

close-up

X-Men: Dream's End

Marvel

Writers/Artists: various

The death of Colossus, reprinted here for the first time. For too long, mutants were threatened by the twin specters of the Legacy Virus and anti-mutant politics. Now, the X-Men hope to end both threats, but at what cost to their oldest and dearest? Are there deaths from which the X-Men can't return? Featuring Mystique, Cable and the last issue of Bishop's solo series. 192pg ... $17.99

ON SALE DECEMBER 15

brothers deal with family secrets and social upheaval. $2.95

The Authority: Revolution 3 (Ed Brubaker & Dustin Nguyen + Richard Friend; *WildStorm)* While the Authority combats the chaos spreading through its country, attempts at locating the Supervillains responsible are coming up empty. Mature readers. $2.95

one-shot **Blood: A Tale** (J.M. DeMatteis & Kent Williams; *Vertigo;* tpbk) Following the endless cycle of life and death to find the seeds of redemption in a fever-dream of a dying king, love eternal, and a life of bloodlust. Mature readers. 192pg $19.95

The Books of Magick: Life During Wartime 6 (Si Spencer) A friendly dice game turns disastrous for Tim Hunter and his best mates. Mature readers. $2.50

one-shot **Bouncer: Raising Cain** (Alexandro Jodorowsky & François Boucq; tpbk) *See Close-Up, right.*

Cartoon Network Block Party 4 (various) Courage the Cowardly Dog chases a monstrous catfish, and the Grim Reaper tells goofy bedtime stories to Billy & Mandy! $2.25

Catwoman: When in Rome 4 (of 6; Jeph Loeb & Tim Sale) The six-issue miniseries kicks into high gear as Catwoman takes on Rome and the sexy-but-deadly Cheetah. $3.50

one-shot **DC: The New Frontier** Vol 1 (Darwyn Cooke; tpbk) Collects issues #1-3 plus the three extra pages originally seen only in Wizard. World War II is over. The Cold War has begun. The Age of the Superhero is in decline. But where are the heroes of tomorrow? 208pg $19.95

Elfquest: The Grand Quest Vol 6 (Richard Pini + Wendy Pini & Wendy Pini; tpbk) Reprints Elfquest #18-20. Cutter and his tribemates are reunited as they seek the legendary Palace of the High Ones. 224pg b&w $9.95

Green Lantern: Rebirth 3 (of 6; Geoff Johns & Ethan Van Sciver) As his willpower grows, Hal Jordan continues to fight the forces of the Spectre. But is the world ready for him? $2.95

JLA Classified 2 (of 3; Grant Morrison & Ed McGuinness + Dexter Vines) With the whereabouts of the JLA still a mystery, Batman is forced to face off against Gorilla Grodd and his army with the aid of a Justice League of the Dark Knight's own design. $2.95

The Losers 19 *(The Pass* 4 of 4; Andy Diggle & Jock; *Vertigo)* The Losers are about to discover just how their CIA handler Max betrayed America, and he doesn't intend to let them escape with the knowledge alive. Mature readers. $2.95

Manhunter 5 (Marc Andreyko & Jesus Saiz + Jimmy Palmiotti) As the heroes of the DC Universe reel from several deaths in their community, Manhunter resolves to track a hero-killer on her own – but can she find him before the JLA does? $2.50

Richard Dragon 8 (Chuck Dixon & Scott McDaniel + Andy Owens) As Bronze Tiger fights for his life in a Detroit hospital, Richard Dragon is asked to do the impossible: infiltrate the organisation of the murderous drug-lord Soldado. $2.50

Sleeper Season Two 7 (of 12; Ed Brubaker & Sean Phillips; *WildStorm)* It's the battle of the hidden agendas as Holden and Miss Misery are stuck on a deadly mission with Peter Grimm – and secrets abound on all sides! Mature readers. $2.95

Solo 2 (Richard Corben & John Arcudi + Corben) This volume sets about bringing life to a mummy in ancient Egypt, stepping into the trenches of a futuristic war, strapping on a six-shooter for a western, and then bringing about the plague. 48pg $4.95

Space Ghost 2 (of 6; Joe Kelly & Ariel Olivetti) Space Ghost must drag himself back from the brink of extinction on a strange ghost planet armed with a new-found arsenal and a desire to even the score against his colleagues on the elite force that put him there. $2.95

Superman/Batman 16 *(Absolute Power* 3 of 5; Jeph Loeb & Carlos Pacheco + Jesus Merino) Is there a world for Superman and Batman to rule, or have the hunted become the prey? $2.95

Teen Titans Go! 14 (J. Torres & Todd Nauck + Lary Stucker) Speedy joins the Titans as Plasmus returns to menace the city. $2.25

The Witching 7 (Jonathan Vankin & Leigh Gallagher + Dan Green; *Vertigo)* It's California or bust for Elsa and Sook as they hit the open roads of the Great American Southwest in Elsa's souped-up sports car. Mature readers... $2.95

Wonder Woman 211 (Greg Rucka & Sean Phillips) As the Embassy staff mourn the tragic loss they suffered at the hands of Medousa, Diana must face the realisation that things have irrevocably changed for her and her allies. $2.25

close-up

Bouncer: Raising Cain

DC Comics

Writer: Alexandro Jodorowsky

Artist: François Boucq

The Bouncer is the law inside the Inferno Saloon, but he's got no life beyond its walls. When his nephew shows up with tales of a one-eyed man who killed the boy's mother, father and dog, the Bouncer finds himself pulled once more into the legacy of violence and degradation that has marked their family for two generations. Mature readers. 128pg $17.95

ON SALE DECEMBER 22

Marvel

Astonishing X-Men 8 *(Dangerous* 3 of 6; Joss Whedon & John Cassaday) Did you miss the return of Colossus last August? Well, here'a chance to catch up. $2.99

Black Widow 4 (Richard K. Morgan & Bill Sienkiewicz) The Motherland has changed a lot in the years since Natasha left the KGB. Picking up the pieces of her lost past leads her straight back to the elite black-ops training academy known only as the Red Room..or what's left it. $2.99

Excalibur 8 *(Saturday Night Fever* 1 of 3; Chris Claremont & Aaron Lopresti) Professor X continues to bring order and justice to Genosha, but will the citizens be willing to follow him after they discover his terrible secret? $2.99

Marvel Age Spider-Man 18 (Todd Dezago + Stan Lee + Steve Ditko & Logan Lubera) With much of New York thinking that Spidey is washed up, and worse, a coward, the Wall-Crawler has to put his best web forward to re-establish himself as a hero and crime fighter. $2.25

Marvel Masterworks: The Incredible Hulk Vol 2 (Stan Lee & various) Dr Robert Bruce Banner's mean, green alter ego battles General Thunderbolt Ross, the Leader and his Humanoids, the Executioner and more communists than you can shake a tank at. Collects Tales to Astonish #59-79. 256pg $49.99

Mystique 22 *(Quiet* 3 of 5; Sean McKeever & Manuel Garcia) Can Mystique really go through with her murderous mission? $2.99

New Thunderbolts 3 *(Zeroes To Heroes* 3 of 6; Fabian Nicieza + Kurt Busiek & Tom Grummett) The United Nations building is going to collapse – unless the new Thunderbolts trapped inside are willing to risk their lives to stop it. $2.99

one-shot **New X-Men: Academy X Vol 1: Choosing Sides** (Nunzio Defilippis + Christina Weir & Randy Green + Staz Johnson; tpbk) The children at the X-Mansion thought they had it tough when Professor X was running things – but now that Cyclops and Emma Frost have taken over the reins of the school, they're wishing for the simpler times of yesterday! 144pg $14.99

Nightcrawler 4 (Roberto Aguirre-Sacasa & Darick Robertson) Will Nightcrawler be able to save young Seth from the evil thing that killed his thirteen young friends? $2.99

one-shot **Punisher: Red Xmas** (Jimmy Palmiotti & Justin Gray + Mark Texeira; *Max Comics)* Following an eight casket funeral, a group of vengeful mob widows go holiday shopping for the perfect assassin to take down the man responsible. Mature readers. 48pg $3.99

Rogue 6 (Rob Rodi & Cliff Richards) Rogue must make some difficult choices about her family, about the man she loves, and about who she really is. $2.99

Ultimate Elektra 5 (of 5; Mike Carey & Salvador Larroca) The battle lines have been drawn – but will Elektra find herself on the same side of the law as Matt Murdock? $2.25

Venom vs Carnage (Peter Milligan & Clayton Crain; tpbk) What's worse than one mayhem-producing symbiote? Two. What's worse than that? Three. 96pg $9.99

ON SALE FROM

DEC 29

Dark Horse

Concrete: The Human Dilemma 1 (of 6; Paul Chadwick) As the accidental celebrity Concrete, Ron Lithgow is now courted by a high-profile CEO to lend his name to a controversial population control programme. Mature readers. b&w $3.50

one-shot **Doctor Solar Man of the Atom** Vol 1 (Paul S. Newman & Matt Murphy + Bob Fujitani; hbk) The original incarnation of the classic hero Doctor Solar, Man of the Atom springs to life in this remastered collection of classic stories. 208pg $49.95

Star Wars: Republic 72 (John Ostrander & Jan Duursema + Dan Parsons) Jedi spy-master Tholme decides to send his best agent, Aayla Secura, to the Outer Rim worlds in hopes of verifying Quinlan Vos' story. ..$2.99

Super Manga Blast! 48 (various) Two *What's Michael?* episodes start this issue off, as we find out why kittens and stereo speakers are a bad mix. Mature readers. b&w 128pg $5.99

Ultraman Tiga Vol 2: Past Sins, Present Dangers (Tony Wong & Khoo Fuk Lung; tpbk) The 100-foot tall hero is revived in the year 2049 and faces a world ill-equipped to handle the onslaught of gigantic beasts peppering the globe. Collects issues #5-10 of the series. 200pg $15.95

DC Comics

Adam Strange 4 (of 8; Andy Diggle & Pascal Ferry) The search for Rann leads Adam to seek help from DC's strangest space-faring team, the Omega Men. $2.95

one-shot **Barnum!** (Howard Chaykin & David Tischman + Niko Henrichon; *Vertigo)* When brilliant inventor Nikola Tesla and a cadre of the world's richest men plot to destroy America, secret agent P.T. Barnum must assemble a team of the wildest circus freaks on the planet to save the world. Mature readers. 128pg $19.95

Batgirl 59 *(Fresh Blood* 4 of 4; Andersen Gabrych & Alé Garza + Jesse Delperdang) Batgirl and Robin find themselves in the fight of their lives as they are forced to bust up a bevy of Blüdhaven baddies, including Brutale and the Trigger Twins. $2.50

Batman 635 *(Under the Hood* 1 of 4; Judd Winick & Doug Mahnke + Tom Nguyen) While battling new criminal chieftains raiding his city, Batman is confronted with a face from the past – or rather, a hidden face from the past. Welcome the return of the Red Hood. $2.25

Doom Patrol 7 (John Byrne & Byrne + Doug Hazlewood) The Devolutionists strike, turning back the evolutionary clock on innocents the world over. $2.50

The Flash 217 (Geoff Johns & Howard Porter + Livesay) The events of *Identity Crisis* affect the Flash's world as a gathering of unlikely individuals pay their last respects to the fallen and Wally West makes a monumental decision about his personal life. $2.25

Hellblazer 203 *(Reasons to be Cheerful* 2 of 4; Mike Carey & Leonardo Manco; *Vertigo)* As Constantine's three children continue to hunt and destroy his closest friends and allies, John finds aid from a highly unlikely source. Mature readers. $2.75

JSA: Strange Adventures 5 (of 6; Kevin J. Anderson & Barry Kitson + Gary Erskine) While the JSA works to rebuild a devastated city, Johnny Thunder stands alone, barely clinging to the hope that Thunderbolt is alive. 40pg $3.50

new **The Legion of Super-Heroes** 1 (Mark Waid & Barry Kitson) The early days of the 31st century are a Golden Age for the galaxy, as poverty, famine, war and disease have become relics of the past, not only on Earth but on most other known worlds. The Dawning Millennium is utopian: shining, optimistic, bright...and deadly dull. That is, until a bright, defiant, energized team of super-powered teenagers from different worlds is assembled! 40pg $2.95

Outsiders 19 *(Most Wanted* 3 of 3; Judd Winick & Carlos D'Anda) Arsenal's daughter is missing, and her life hangs in the balance. Can the Outsiders find her in time? $2.50

The Razor's Edge: Warblade 3 (John Ridley & Simon Bisley; *WildStorm)* By saving a woman from imminent death, Warblade has signed what could amount to his death warrant. Mature readers. $2.95

Superman 212 (Brian Azzarello & Jim Lee + Scott Williams) Another round of vanishings takes place – but this time, Superman is one of the victims. $2.50

T.H.U.N.D.E.R. Agents Archives Vol 5 (various; hbk) This volume collects T.H.U.N.D.E.R. Agents #12-14 and Dynamo #4 (1967-69) with a foreword by Bill Schelly. 216pg $49.95

Transgenesis: 2029 Vol 1: Fides (Anne Ploy & Didier Pagot; tpbk) A theocratic government has developed a bio-engineered virus that kills anyone who doubts the state religion. Now theology student Marie Appton must risk everything to stop the Fides programme and put an end to the dictatorship. Mature readers. 104pg $14.95

Marvel

Amazing Spider-Man 515 *(Skin Deep* 1 of 4; J. Michael Straczynski &

Mike Deodato Jr + Mark Brooks) When a former classmate of Peter Parker botches an ambitious scientific experiment, it's Peter who just might pay the ultimate price, and learn a valuable lesson about great power and great responsibility. $2.25

one-shot **Astonishing X-Men Vol 1: Gifted** (Joss Whedon & John Cassaday; tpbk) Cyclops and Emma Frost re-form the X-Men with the express purpose of astonishing the world. Collects Astonishing X-Men #1-6. 144pg $14.99

Avengers: Earth's Mightiest 4 (of 8, Joe Casey & Scott Kolins) While Iron Man and Co solidify their tenuous relationships with both the government and the general public, how will the Avengers' more visible profile affect the team's future? $3.50

Captain America 2 (Ed Brubaker & Steve Epting) Cap is awakened in the dead of the night by Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D. who need the kind of help only he can provide. $2.99

Elektra: The Hand 5 (Akira Yoshida & Christian Gossett + Jim Chueng) Betrayed by the very group he helped create, Yoshioka and Eliza take on The Hand in the climax. $2.99

one-shot **Elektra: The Movie** (Sean Mckeever & Mike Perkins) Official adaptation of the movie. Includes extras including interviews, pinups, handbook entries, Elektra checklists and more. 72pg $5.99

Exiles 57 *(Bump in the Night* 3 of 3; Tony Bedard & James Calafiore) The Exiles enter into a world of swords and sorcery that any true X-fan will enjoy! Guest-starring the villainy of Kulan Gath. $2.99

Fantastic Four Visionaries: John Byrne Vol 3 (John Byrne; tpbk) Featuring a four-part epic deep within the Negative Zone – and the death of...Reed Richards. Collects Fantastic Four #251-257 and Annual #17, Avengers #233, and Thing #2. 264pg $24.99

one-shot **Identity Disc** (Robert Rodi & John Higgins; tpbk) *See Close-Up, right.*

Iron Man 2 *(Extremis* 2 of 6; Warren Ellis & Adi Granov) What abomination of technology has been unleashed on the world by an old friend of Tony Stark's – and is it even something that the power of Iron Man can combat? $2.99

Marvel Age Fantastic Four 10 (Marc Sumerak & Alitha Martinez) How did Dr Doom survive his exile in space, and what secrets has he brought back with him that could destroy his sworn enemies once and for all? $2.25

Marvel Age Spider-Man Team-Up 4 (Todd Dezago & Ron Lim) When a horde of trolls freezes time to launch surprise attacks on both Earth and Asgard, Spider-Man and the mighty Thor find themselves the only ones left to stand against the armies of Krillk the Conqueror! $1.75

New Avengers 2 *(The Raft* 2 of 5; Brian Michael Bendis & David Finch) Think you saw it all in Disassembled? Well, Marvel just invented some more! $2.25

Ultimate Fantastic Four 14 *(Negative* 2 of 5; Warren Ellis & Adam Kubert) Young Reed Richards leads his three friends into the unknown depths of the N-Zone with an attempt to find a way to reverse the consequences of the accident that made them what they are. $2.25

new **Ultimate Secret** 1 (of 4; Warren Ellis & Steve McNiven) A new propulsion system devised by the US government puts Mars just days away. But someone wants Earth's progression into space to stop. $2.99

one-shot **Wha... Huh?** (various) What if the Identity Crisis happened in the Marvel Universe? What if Modok has an itch? What if Kevin Smith finished his books? $2.99

one-shot **What If Aunt May Had Died Instead of Uncle Ben?** (Ed Brubaker & Andrea Divito) What if Peter's mother figure, Aunt May, had been the one in the path of that bullet? $2.99

one-shot **What If Dr Doom Had Become The Thing?** (Karl Kesel & Paul Smith) A seemingly minor decision made long before the FF even existed could have changed everything for the World's Greatest Super-Team, Victor Von Doom and even the Incredible Hulk! $2.99

one-shot **What If General Ross Had Become The Hulk?** (Peter David & Bart Sears) Meet General Thaddeus Thunderbolt Ross. Experience what happens when he becomes the mightiest weapon on two legs. $2.99

one-shot **What If Jessica Jones Had Joined The Avengers?** (Brian Michael Bendis & Michael Gaydos) Jessica Jones, ex-superhero private eye was once tapped to join the Avengers, but chose not to and gave up being a super-hero altogether. But what if she had taken the job? $2.99

one-shot **What If Karen Page Had Lived?** (Brian Michael Bendis & Kevin Smith + Alex Maleev) The events that followed Karen Page's death spiralled Matt Murdock's life out of control and he has never recovered. So, what if it happened not to happen? $2.99

one-shot **What If Magneto Had Formed The X-Men With Professor X?** (Chris Claremont & Cully Hamner) Imagine a world where the Master of Magnetism had chosen a different path. Or perhaps he could have swayed Xavier from his own beliefs? $2.99

Wolverine: The End (Paul Jenkins & Claudio Castellini; tpbk) It's the distant future, and a series of strange events sends the aging Wolverine on a globe-spanning quest to find the final truths behind his origin. 144pg $14.99

RELEASED AND ON SALE IN

DECEMBER

Abstract Studios

Strangers in Paradise 71 (Terry Moore) Things heat up as the SiP gang makes its presence known in the original Sin City – Las Vegas! 24pg b&w $2.95

Strangers in Paradise Book 3 Part 6 (Terry Moore; hbk) Collects issues #58-69 of Vol 3 – from the heartbreaking tale of Francine's wedding to David's Story, Katchoo's art debut and beyond. b&w $49.95

Alternative Comics

new **Lunch Hour Comix** 1 (Robert Ullman) Cartoonist Robert Ullman has turned the 24-Hour Comic concept on its ear, producing a daily journal comic with a stringent limit of one hour per strip... the lunch hour, to be specific! Now, the best of a year's worth of strips have been collected. Mature readers. 64pg b&w $4.95

Amaze Ink/ Slave Labor

new **Biff! Bam! Pow!** 1 (Evan Dorkin & Sarah Dyer) Things kick off with controversial Interstellar Anyweight Champ One-Punch Goldberg, and how she left the mob-run boxing world to become a full-time crime-fighter. 24pg $3.95

one-shot **Loyola Chin and the San Peligran Order** (Gene Yang; tpbk) During one of her many food-induced dreams, high school sophomore Loyola Chin meets the mysterious Saint Danger on the Highest Mountaintop in the World. 104pg b&w $9.95

Bear 7 (Jamie Smart) Everyone becomes infected with romance, leading to the inevitable heartache, ants, and pie-fighting! 24pg b&w $2.95

Gloomcookie 22 (Serena Valentino & Harley Sparx) Vincent and the members of the Carnival Macabre have declared war on Marguerite's New Orleans Carnival for killing Sebastian and the Monster. Mature readers. 24pg b&w $2.95

Little Scrowlie 8 (Todd Meister & Jennifer Feinberg) Lost in the trackless, spider-infested depths of Hell, Elisabeth, Scrowlie, and company must find the legendary Brave One if they ever expect to reach home. 24pg b&w $2.95

Nightmares and Fairy Tales 11 (Serena Valentino & FSc) Frightening tale of murder, romance and ghostly visits from the beyond, as told by a little doll named Annabelle. Mature readers. 24pg b&w $2.95

Street Angel 4 (Jim Rugg & Brian Maruca) Street Angel fights hunger, eats a donut, and wears a hat. 24pg b&w $2.95

Antarctic Press

Dragon Arms Pocket Manga Vol 2 (Carl Stone & David Hutchison; tpbk) Eon, one-time saviour and now King of Landres, has become corrupted by his power. 152pg b&w $9.99

Gold Digger 59 (Fred Perry) Luan and Gar proceed through the Proving Grounds trials at record speed, which worries their final opponent, the spirit of Grand Master Shun himself. $2.99

Neotopia Vol 4 #5 (Rod Espinosa) Nalyn and the remainder of her fleet head to Felltower to confront the Krossian Emperors themselves. $2.99

Ninja High School 123 (Robby Bevard & Katie Bair) Yoji is on the run. But where to? Some hillbilly backwater? A beach of sexy volleyballers? Japan itself, ancient home of ninjas and samurai? And why must he bring along a highly unskilled sober drunken ninja? b&w $2.99

Panzer: 1946 #3 (Ted Nomura & various) The Fatherland creates its next deadly weapon, a female sonderkommando Maus defense force. 48pg b&w $5.95

Quagmire USA 6 (Ben Dunn) Nearly all of Quagmire is now enslaved by the wizard Baschur's soul furnace. Our heroes have freed some of Baschur's captives, but now he's on to them. b&w $2.99

APC

one-shot **APC Christmas Special** (various) Featuring five festive eight-page stories including: B1N4RY, Assassin School, The Chase, Comicana and Monster Club. 44pg $4.95

Assassin School 8 (Phil Littler & Edu Francisco) Body part smugglers have caught Emma Lee and her friend, and the two are planning escape. 28pg .. $3.50

B1N4RY 6 (Richard Emms & Jim Sutherns) Finally the digital hero is coming to grips with his powers and starts to use them, protecting his nation from a terrorist attack. 28pg $3.50

Monster Club Vol 3 (Richard Emms & Dan Boultwood; tpbk) Dan Boultwood's art has turned an indie sleeper into a success, and now you can obtain the first work of the new creative team collected into this 100 page collected edition. 100pg $16.95

Archie Comics

Archie & Friends 88 (George Gladir & Rex Lindsey) When his new robot follows Archie's orders instead of his own, Mr Lodge is ready to send it to the scrap metal heap – until Archie and Veronica convince him to let the robot guard his mall from thieves! $2.19

Betty & Veronica 205 (Kathleen Webb & Barbara Slate + Jeff Shultz) The eternal connection that binds Archie and his gal pals together is the very thing that could drive them apart! Will the status quo once again prevail? $2.19

Jughead 162 (Craig Boldman & Rex Lindsey) Most modelling agents wouldn't give Jughead the time of day, but when this particular agent notices Jughead's wrist, he deems it perfect for modeling wristwatches! $2.19

Sabrina Vol 2 #63 (Tania del Rio) Sabrina, Shinji, Llandra and Harvey take a group trip to a winter cabin near a ski resort. $2.19

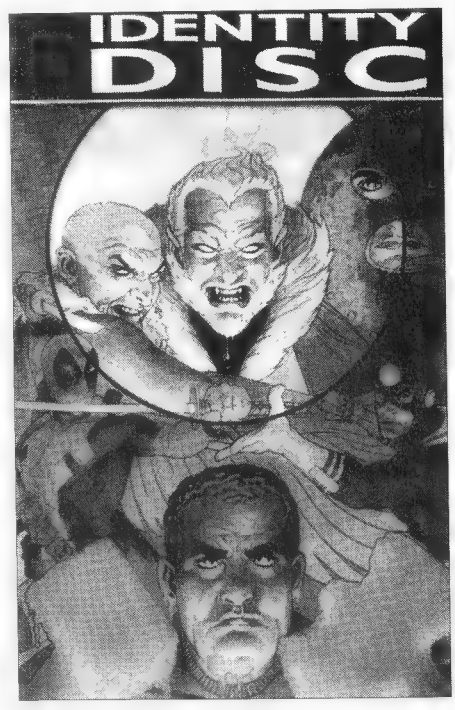
Sonic the Hedgehog 144 (various) Using a long departed evil doctor's greatest unused device, can even the combined might and intellect of King Sonic, Guardian Knuckles, and the scientific geniuses Rotor and Cobar, be enough to fix time... in time? $2.19

Veronica 158 (Dan Parent) When Betty and Veronica co-anchor the public access news, it's a clash between hard-hitting journalism and glamorous fluff! $2.19

Avatar Press

Alan Moore's Yuggoth Cultures (Alan Moore & various; tpbk) The career-spanning short works of Alan Moore are collected here with over 50pg of additional material that was not in the original miniseries. Mature readers. 192pg b&w $19.99

Alan Moore's Hypothetical Lizard 1 (Alan Moore & Lorenzo Lorente) What would you pay to learn the innermost secrets of wizards? Young prostitute Somsom has made the ultimate sacrifice; literally sworn to secrecy by



close-up

Identity Disc

Marvel Comics

Writer: Robert Rodi

Artists: John Higgins

Six of Marvel's most violent and cunning villains – Sabretooth, Bullseye, the Juggernaut, Deadpool, Sandman and the Vulture – are forced to work together by a mysterious agent who somehow knows every dark and dirty secret in their violent lives. Their mission: to collect the nearly priceless identity disc. Collects Identity Disc #1-5. 120pg $13.99

ON SALE DECEMBER 29

cosmetic surgery, the two halves of Somsom's brain have been severed, leaving her able to hear and see... but not speak or act. Variant cover. Mature readers. 40pg b&w $3.99

Brian Pulido's Belladonna 4 (Brian Pulido & Clint Hilinski) Belladonna tightens the noose around the neck of her Viking opponents and throws down the gauntlet of final battle! $3.99

new **Brian Pulido's Unholy** 1 (Brian Pulido & Di Amorim) Set in the crummy under-crust of modern day Detroit, Unholy is the story of Penny, a rebellious teenage stoner and atheist. After a fatal accident, she's drafted by God to be his assassin; a God she doesn't even believe in. b&w $3.50

one-shot **Ennis & McCrea's Dicks Winter Fun Special** 1 (Garth Ennis & John Mccrea) Prepare yourself for more Christmastime offensiveness with Dougie, Ivor, Wanker and the whole gang in the tale *Yule Log in the Bog*. Mature readers. b&w $3.50

Garth Ennis 303 #3 (of 6; Garth Ennis & Jacen Burrows) The truth is revealed, leaving the Russian colonel with a task so terrible that he turns his back on all he has known. But there are battles still to be fought high in the peaks of the northwest frontier, and all those people concerned soon realise that Afghanistan isn't finished with them yet. Variant cover. Mature readers. $3.99

one-shot **Joe R. Lansdale's The Drive-In** (Joe R. Lansdale & Andres Guinaldo; tpbk) Collected here is the complete four-issue series with bonus materials, including a new interview with Lansdale about the writing of The Drive-In. Mature readers. 112pg b&w $12.99

Bongo Comics

Simpsons Comics 101 (Boothby & Costanza) There are few things in the world that have a closer relationship than Homer and his sofa. So many memories, so many televised sporting events, so many pork rinds, such a big impression left in the cushions. . $2.99

Bart Simpson 21 (various) On a trip to the Capital City Historical Museum, Bart and Nelson are bent on destroying Principal Skinner's reputation, but their plan backfires leaving some doubt about who's really going to become history. $2.99

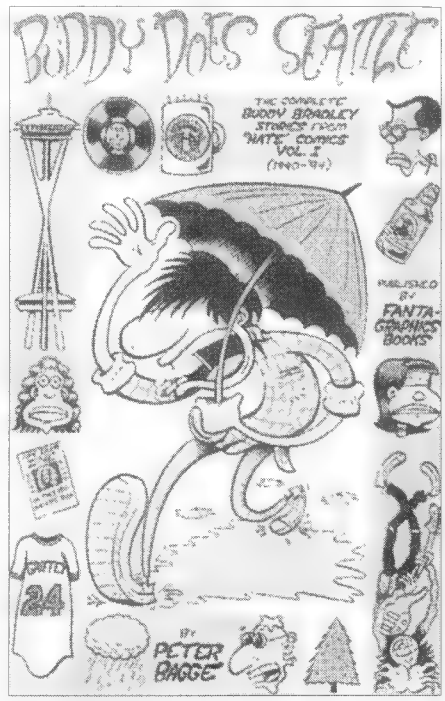
Claypool Comics

Deadbeats 69 (Richard Howell & Ricardo Villagran) Years ago, Erik Powell's Med School roommate entered into a demon's bargain for wealth and success. Now the cost has become more frightful than he knew. b&w $2.50

Elvira, Mistress of the Dark 140 (various) Santa's enchanted bookcase, his gift to Elvira for Christmas, unleashes all manner of contents from its books, including tough-guy author Ernest Chandler. Photo cover. b&w $2.50

Drawn & Quarterly

one-shot **Chronicles of Lucky Ello** (Peter Thompson; graphic novel) Showcasing groundbreaking artwork by cartoonists and artists from around the globe. Mature readers. 80pg b&w $9.95


BUDDY DOES SEATTLE
THE COMPLETE BUDDY BRADLEY STORIES FROM "HATE" COMICS VOL. 1 (1990-94)
PUBLISHED BY FANTAGRAPHICS BOOKS
BY PETER BAGGE

close-up

Buddy Does Seattle

Fantagraphics Books

Writer/Artist: Peter Bagge

Collects the entire *Seattle* arc from the pages of Hate – the first time the entire saga has appeared under one cover. It's a showing of Peter Bagge's association with grunge culture, including the characters Buddy the slacker antihero, Valerie-of-the-Prozac, venereally diseased Stinky, and George Cecil Hamilton III, the token intellectual. Mature. 340pg b&w $14.95

ON SALE DECEMBER

one-shot **Dog and Water** (Anders Nilsen; graphic novel) The story of wild animals, armed confrontation, an oil pipeline, and swimming to Asia. Follow a boy and his bear as they wander further into the middle of nowhere and away from everything they think they know. Mature readers. 88pg $9.95

one-shot **Lady Pep** (Julie Doucet; graphic novel) Collects Julie's post-comics career illustrations, lino-cut, and collage work from various projects, including her obscure Sophie Punt hand-made magazine. Mature readers. 80pg $9.95

Dreamwave

new **Devil May Cry** Vol 1 (James McDonough & Adam Patyk + Pat Lee; tpbk) To defeat a devil, Dante must first become a devil. But will unleashing the supernatural evil that he's struggled to contain for so long grant him the power necessary to finally avenge his father's murder at the hands of the Demon Lord Mundus? 152pg .. $15.95

Killzone 2 (John Ney Rieber & Travel Foreman) As the elusive Helghast Sniper hunts down Rico's exhausted squad one by one, the few remaining heroes must try and stop the otherworldly horde from overrunning their team on the planet Vecta. Variant cover. $2.95

Pat Lee's Transformers/G.I. Joe Vol 2 #3 (James McDonough & Adam Patyk + Pat Lee) Snake Eyes is a hard ninja to kill, which is why COBRA Commander has called in one of his biggest guns to do the job: the assassin Firefly! $2.95

one-shot **Transformers Energon** (Simon Furman & Alex Milne) The once and former Decepticon commander Megatron and the leader of the savage Terrorcons Scorponok clash in the frozen wastes of the Yukon Territory. .. $2.95

one-shot **Transformers: Generation One 2004 Datatracks Annual** (James McDonough & various) Includes an original short story featuring the one and only Optimus Prime fighting alongside his brother, Ultra Magnus! $1.95

Transformers: Generation One Vol 3 #12 (James McDonough & Adam Patyk + Don Figueroa) Optimus Prime is finally back, ready to chew Energon and kick bumper-and he's all outta Energon! But the question is: where is he? Variant cover. $2.95

Transformers War Within Vol 3: The Age of Wrath 4 (Simon Furman & Joe Ng) Stranded on a strange alien world, far from Cybertron, Turbomaster Flash is about to realise there really is no place like home. $2.95

El Capitan

Stray Bullets 36 (David Lapham) All the girls want to date him. All the boys want to be him. He's a rapist, a murderer, and he carries pointy ninja weapons. His name is Mike Hussey, and he's the new kid in school. Mature readers. b&w $3.50

Fantagraphics

Angry Youth Comix 8 (Johnny Ryan) This issue is a special all-Loady McGee & Sinus O'Gynus extravaganza, featuring Loady & Sinus stories. 24pg b&w $3.50

Blood Orange 4 (various) Exclusive new stories by Brian Ralph (Reggie-12) Lark Pien (Long Tail Kitty) Tobias Tak (Upside Down) Rebecca Dart (Rabbithead) and Ted May (Orchid). Mature readers. 48pg b&w $5.95

one-shot **Buddy Does Seattle** (Peter Bagge; graphic novel) *See Close-Up, above.*

The Comics Journal 264 (various) Revamped with more pages. This issue features a cover interview with Ivan Brunetti (conducted by editor Gary Groth) a cartoonist known for his caustic, scabrous, and self-lacerating comic, Schizo. 192pg $9.95

Crumb Sketchbook Vol 10 (R. Crumb) Volume 10, covering mid-1975 through to early 1977 represents one of the more inquisitive and soul-searching periods in the artist's life. Mature readers. 160pg b&w $19.95

one-shot **Fatty Arbuckle & His Funny Friends** (various; graphic novel) Compiles a jolly good number of the Kinema Comics from the 1920s featuring legendary and controversial giant of the silver screen Fatty Arbuckle. b&w $4.95

Hate Annual 5 (Peter Bagge) The latest installment in the life of Buddy Bradley as he goes through a whole new set of drastic lifestyle changes – as well as a brand new (albeit accidental) makeover. Mature readers. 48pg $4.95

one-shot **Muzzlers, Guzzlers, & Good Yeggs** (Joe Coleman; tpbk) Coleman is obsessed with violence and dementia, particularly in regard to cultural antiheroes and serial killers. Here's a whole collection of examples. Mature readers. 180pg b&w $16.95

Image Comics

new **The Amazing Joy Buzzards** 1 (Mark Smith & Dan Hipp) Telling of a rock-and-roll adventure band fighting giant robots and evil witchdoctors, while exploring supernatural phenomena with the help of their mythical Mexican wrestler friend El Campeon. $2.95

one-shot **Ascend** (Keith Arem + Scott Cuthbertson & Christopher Shy; graphic novel Sebastian, Gideon and Seraphine are angels exiled from Heaven and forced to live among mortals. They soon separate and seek a new path to return them home. 120pg $14.95

new **Battle Hymn** 1 (of 5; B. Clay Moore & Jeremy Haun + Ande Parks) After the appearance of strange and superpowerful figures across the land and sea, the government begins to bring them all together. But for what purpose? $2.95

Battle of the Planets: Princess 3 (of 6; David Wohl & Wilson Tortosa; *Top Cow*) Frustrated with her boss, frustrated with her teammates, frustrated with her life, Princess does what any red-blooded teenager would do – she quits G-Force! b&w 24pg $2.99

Burglar Bill 2 (of 6; Paul Grist) After a violent confrontation followed by a night in the local police cells, Burglar Bill is looking to lay low and keep out of trouble. 40pg b&w $2.95

Cholly and Flytrap 2 (of 4; Arthur Suydam) When Flytrap is accidentally shanghaied and forced into slavery in a secret fight world, his partner Cholly's odyssey to rescue him from certain doom begins. 48pg $4.95

The Darkness 18 *(Hell House* 2 of 4; David Lapham & Brian Denham; *Top Cow)* When a woman turns up dead in Jackie Estacado's Atlantic City hotel room, a total mob war breaks out! $2.99

new **The Darkness/Superman** 1 (of 2; Ron Marz & Tyler Kirkham; *Top Cow)* When Darkness-bearer Jackie Estacado looks to expand his family's crime operations into Metropolis, he runs into resistance from the local mob. $2.99

one-shot **Desperado Primer** (Paul Jenkins + Tony Harris & various) Preview, featuring two original stories as a taster for the upcoming Desperado project. $1.99

The Detonator 2 (Mike Baron + Mel Rubi & Barbara Kaalberg) The Detonator blew up Grindcorps' Hong Kong HQ with surgical precision. He thought he got them all. He was wrong. 48pg $2.50

one-shot **Failsafe** 0 (Mark Waid & Marc Silvestri; *Top Cow)* Wolf and Ellis are the superpowered hunter-killers in the secret Failsafe branch of the government. Their mission: Watch the Watchmen, police the police, and fulfill the missions that are blacker than Black Ops! 24pg $0.25

new **Flaming Carrot** 1 (Bob Burden) America's first surrealist superhero partners up with the sassy, saucy, former juvenile delinquent, Dynamite Girl, to battle Burden's most asinine villain yet: an eight-foot, anime-loving, poker-playing, baby-eating Hot Wing! b&w $2.95

Forsaken 5 (Carmen Treffiletti & Kristian Donaldson + Nick Zagami) When the team discovers there is much more to The Separatist's intentions than what they're involved in, they must travel to Krel in the hopes of postponing the treaty. $2.95

one-shot **G-Man** 1 (Chris Giarrusso) The origin of G-Man plus a 30-page collection of Giarrusso's comic strips featuring G-Man and the gang. 64pg $5.95

Frankenstein Mobster 7 (Mark Wheatley) Bimonthly. The Frankenstein Mobster faces his daughter in the heart-wrenching conclusion to the *Made Man* story arc. Variant cover. $2.95

The Gift 9 (Raven Gregory & Cristina Lopez + Jason Keith) Bimonthly. When a young group of teens suffers from a case of mistaken identity, only one survives the tragic encounter. $2.99

Humankind 4 *(All Roads Lead To (New) Rome* 4 of 5; Tony Daniel & Kevin Conrad; *Top Cow)* In 12 hours, Bruno will become a deadly walking plague that will wipe out the entire human population on Planet Thera. $2.99

Invincible 20 (Robert Kirkman & Ryan Ottley) Mark is on campus at his new college and something is amiss. Meet the zombie from issue 6! $2.95

Jack Staff 8 (Paul Grist) Bimonthly. It's 1942, and the German Army is set to invade Castletown! The only ones who can stop it are the Freedom Fighters, but they have to stop Kapitan Krieg, the Nazi Super Soldier first. $3.50

Liberty Meadows Book 2: Comforts (Frank Cho; tpbk) Collects issues #10-18, with all the comicstrips remastered (whatever that may mean) and uncensored (we know what *that* means!). 144pg b&w $14.95

new **Mighty Man** 1 (Erik Larsen + Gary Carlson & Mark Englert + Larsen) The 10-part serial that ran in the back of Savage Dragon #109-118 is collected and re-mastered. Billy Berman discovers that Ann Stevens received the Mighty Man powers and he wants those powers for himself! $2.95

Noble Causes 6 (Jay Faerber & Fran Bueno) All the superhero battles, the danger and the public spotlight have finally got to Liz. Is this the end of her marriage to Race? $2.95

Noble Causes, Vol 3: Distant Relatives (Jay Faerber & Fran Bueno, tpbk) Frost and Liz meet twisted versions of the world's favourite heroes when they enter a parallel dimension. Collects Noble Causes: Distant Relatives #1-4, plus a brand new six-page story. 120pg $12.95

PvP 13 (Scott Kurtz) It's Christmas time at the PvP offices, but what do you get the techno nerd who has everything? b&w $2.95

PvP, Vol 2: PvP Reloaded (Scott Kurtz; tpbk) Hormonal teenagers, super-intelligent trolls, employees in custody and monkeys are just your average day at the offices of PvP Magazine. Collects PvP Vol 2 #7-12. 144pg $11.95

one-shot **Quixote** (Michael Avon Oeming & Bryan J.L. Glass + Oeming) *See Close-Up, below.*

Savage Dragon 121 (Erik Larsen) Chaos ensues as the new Commander In Chief contends with friends and foes alike! It's a whole new role for our fin-headed hero! $2.95

Small Gods 6 (Jason Rand & Juan E. Ferreyra) Bobby Pope, psychic and con artist, is recruited by Detective Theodore Irvine of the Denver PD for a 'simple' job. When things go wrong and the job turns into a shootout, Bobby becomes a witness and a liability. b&w ... $2.95

Sylvia Faust 3 (of 4; Jason Henderson & Greg Scott) Tim and Sylvia's relationship heats up as the denizens of the world-famous Apocalypse Drafthouse prepare for a back-breaking, mind-melting, 24-hour movie marathon. $2.95

Tales of Tellos 3 (of 3; Todd Dezago & various) The terrific and terrifying origin of the man who would become The Warrior of the Light, plus Jared's fate now that he's back in the 'real' world. $3.50

Tomb Raider 49 (James Bonny & Tyler Kirkham + Sal Regla; *Top Cow*) Lara Croft faces a showdown with two powerful adversaries from her past: the exotic Lady Jasmine, and evil industrialist, J. Bradley Aulgood. $2.99

Ultra 5 (of 8; Jonathan Luna + Joshua Luna & Jonathan Luna) Pearl Penalosa, AKA Ultra, has earned a legion of fans, a nomination for Best Heroine of the Year and a perfect life. Or so she thinks $2.95

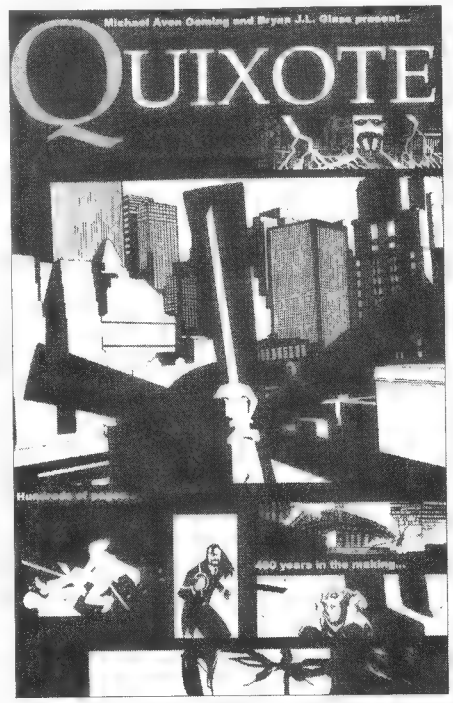
Victory Vol 2 #3 (of 4; Robert Marcelo Cassaro & Petra Leao + Edu Francisco) The Dark Force has been revealed to be the mysterious God of Vanity from Victoria's past. $2.95

Victory Vol 2 #4 (of 4) (Robert Marcelo Cassaro & Petra Leao + Edu Francisco) The God of Vanity and the master of the Dark Force have controlled the game from the beginning, and now they have begun to change the forgotten fantasy of Arton into a reality $2.95

The Walking Dead 15 (Robert Kirkman & Charlie Adlard) Rick Grimes is on a mission. He's got a long road ahead of him and many obstacles in his way, but he's determined. Mature readers b&w $2.95

Waterloo Sunset 3 (of 4; Andrew Stephenson & Trevor Goring) The Cartel has agreed to meet Earth's emissary. The Hunter must guide her there through desert, badlands and deadly wildlife, trailed by all-too-capable enemies with unclear motives. 56pg b&w $6.95

one-shot **Wildguard: Fire Power** 1 (Todd Nauck) As the WildGuard team settles into its headquarters, the media is curious how it will function with two flame-based heroes in the roster $3.50



close-up

Quixote

Image Comics

Writer: Michael Avon Oeming

Artists: Bryan J.L. Glass + Oeming

Could Don Quixote be real? Television reporter Dominique Angel uncovers the story of a crusading street vagrant she dubs Quixote due to his rambling discourses on morality and righteousness. This modern-day quixotic knight believes street punks are monsters, government agents are demons and Dom's own boss is the Devil himself. 304pg b&w $9.95

ON SALE DECEMBER

Witchblade 82 *(Witch Hunt* 3 of 6; Ron Marz & Michael Choi; *Top Cow)* Sara Pezzini gets closer to solving the mystery that very nearly took her life – a mystery reaching all the way to the hierarchy of the Catholic Church. $2.99

Moonstone

Cyclone Bill and the Tall Tales 3 (Dan Dougherty) At the latest audition for the rock band SurpriseSurprise, a mystery man in an Elvis mask tears the place in half with his mighty rock action. b&w $2.95

one-shot **Mr Moto: Welcome Back Mr Moto** (Rafael Nieves & Tim Hamilton; tpbk) With the end of World War Two, Ken Takashi is released from an internment camp. Instead of being greeted by a culture that should be ashamed of what it did to so many innocent men and women, he finds himself surrounded by bigots, still quick to dehumanize any Asian it comes across. 96pg b&w $10.95

The Phantom: The Graham Nolan Sundays Vol 1 (Graham Nolan, tpbk) Collects the Graham Nolan-illustrated Sunday Phantom comic strips, including four complete stories: *The War Mongers, The Briefcase, Terror in Mawitaan* and *The Sinbad Stone.* 122pg $13.95

Oni Press

Love Fights Vol 2 (Andi Watson; tpbk) The scandal surrounding the Flamer's alleged love child may very well be a fake, but that hasn't stopped it from making life difficult for both comic artist Jack and journalist Nora! Mature readers. 168pg b&w $14.95

new **Wet Moon Vol 1: Wandering Companionless** (Ross Campbell, graphic novel) As Cleo heads off for college at the local art school, she's haunted by her melancholic past – a lost love, a lost child. Mature. 168pg b&w $14.95

Ojo 5 (of 5; Sam Kieth & Chris Wisnia) Ojo's appetite has left her with a terrible choice. Will she choose the one she's related to by blood – or by love? Mature readers. b&w $2.99

Queen & Country: Declassified Vol 2 #1 (Greg Rucka & Rick Burchett) Tom Wallace wasn't always the confident, take-charge Head of Section that appeared in the first 25 issues of Queen & Country! Mature b&w $2.99

Penny Farthing

new **Captain Gravity and the Power of Vril** 1 (Joshua Dysart + Sal Velluto & Bob Almond) A young pulp enthusiast is interviewing Willey Ley about an infamous 1947 story, *The Vril*, in which he describes the Nazis' attempt to acquire a pan-ultimate universal power. $2.95

Victorian 25 (of 25; various) Two men – warriors, philosophers, and geniuses – were propelled onto a collision course over 100 years ago by a secret society. The line between good and evil will be blurred irreparably on Christmas Eve as a century's worth of murder and strategy comes to a head. 74pg $5.95

Sirius

Poison Elves Hyena 4 (of 4; Keith Davidsen & Scott Lewis) Face to face with the dreaded Fire Elemental intent on resurrecting the Dark Army beneath him, Hyena must stop the vile creature from capturing the world's most powerful artifact: the Elvin Fire! Mature readers. b&w $2.95

Poison Elves 82 (Drew Hayes) For as long as you've known him, love has kicked Lusiphur's heart around like a tin can. But now, will his black-but-still-beating heart get the better of him? Mature readers. 24pg b&w $2.95

Tokyopop

new **Dears** Vol 1 (Peach-Pit; graphic novel) Aliens have landed on Earth and are now a normal part of society. These beautiful beings have been given the name "DearS" and are trusted and welcomed by most humans. 192pg b&w $9.99

Ai Yori Aoshi Vol 7 (Kou Fumizuki; graphic novel) As the women search for the ultimate itsy bitsy bikini, and Mayu and Tina are at it again, competing for Kaoru's attention. Mature readers. 192pg b&w $9.99

B'tx Vol 7 (Masami Kurumada; graphic novel) As the travelling trio of Hokuto, Teppei and Foh come face-to-face with the army of Quatro, Foh orders his companions to the next point while he deals with this current opponent. 192pg b&w $9.99

Boys Be Vol 2 (Itabashi Masahiro & Tamakoshi Hiroyuki; graphic novel) Valentine's Day is approaching and the competition to give and get chocolates is causing a frenzy! Mature readers. 192pg b&w $9.99

Chronicles of the Cursed Sword Vol 10 (Park Hui-Jin & Yeo Beop-Ryong; graphic novel) As the well-preserved sage Louen enters Rey's mind, she not only discovers the PaSa sword hidden deep within the recesses of his brain, but an even greater secret that Rey himself did not know. 176pg b&w $9.99

one-shot **Clamp North Side** (Clamp; hbk) North Side looks at Clamp's illustrious career in manga. It features art from beloved series such as Clover, Magic Knight Rayearth, Legend of Chun Hyang, Clamp in Wonderland, and many others. Mature readers. 176pg $29.99

one-shot **Clamp South Side** (Clamp; hbk) South Side features art from beloved series such as Man of Many Faces, Duklyon: Clamp School Defenders, Clamp School Detectives, Suki, Wish, CLAMP School Paranormal Investigators and Miyuki-chan in Wonderland. Mature. 208pg $29.99

Crazy Love Story Vol 2 (Lee Vin; graphic novel) Sung Moo is a lone wolf who doesn't seem to care about anybody, but he's on the hunt for love and someone to care for him. 192pg b&w $9.99

Cyborg 009 Vol 9 (Shotaro Ishinomori; graphic novel) 009 has double vision when he sees two Helens – although their faces aren't launching a thousand ships, they sink 009 into a ball of confusion 192pg b&w $9.99

Doll Vol 3 (Mitsukazu Mihara; graphic novel) Shocking tales of life and lust abound as androids known as dolls blur the line between humanity and circuitry. Mature readers. 192pg b&w $9.99

Dream Saga Vol 3 (Megumi Tachikawa, graphic novel) The quest to save the two worlds turns into a tangled web when Yuuki and her companions discover they need the Shinkakyou to get to the Sun God. 192pg b&w $9.99

Eternity Vol 3 (Park Jin-Ryong & Shin Yong-Gwan; graphic novel) Jojo is back and he's got the heads of the high school gangsta world running for their brown pants! 192pg b&w $9.99

Evil's Return Vol 3 (Hwan Shin & Jong-Kyu Lee; graphic novel) As evil encroaches on Yumi and Tae, they meet up with another defender of good in Mirae, a young exorcist from the Vatican. 192pg b&w $9.99

Faeries' Landing Vol 7 (You Hyun; graphic novel) To the shock of many, Myohyang is alive! Meanwhile, Fanta is preparing for a trip to Sokcho, a beach and mountain resort town, on the invitation by Ms Yun. 192pg b&w $9.99

GTO Vol 22 (Tohru Fujisawa; graphic novel) Onizuka must convince Tokiwa that not all men deserve a beating, something about which Ms Daimon won't be very happy! Mature readers. 192pg b&w $9.99

new **Hyper Police** Vol 1 (Mee; graphic novel) Natsuki is a powerful but clumsy cat-girl who works as a bounty hunter for Police Company. Her job is to track down wanted monsters and solve various cases, while her police partner tries to gobbled her up! Mature readers. 192pg b&w $9.99

Hyper Rune Vol 2 (Tamayo Akiyama; graphic novel) The Earth Danger Defense Squad is assembled and leading the team is Rune, the Space Queen. 192pg b&w $9.99

Immortal Rain Vol 4 (Kaori Ozaki; graphic novel) The day of Yuca's rebirth has arrived! As this harbinger of Armageddon busts forth from the womb of Tseeda, Rain and Yuca shed a tear when they see each other – for now they can kill each other! 192pg b&w . $9.99

Kare Kano Vol 13 (Masami Tsuda; graphic novel) It's the end of high school, and everyone is looking toward the future – especially Soichiro Arima. He's got good grades, a great body, and all the popularity! 192pg b&w $9.99

new **Lagoon Engine** Vol 1 (Yukiru Sugisaki; graphic novel) Yen and Jin are brothers in elementary school and successors in the Ragun family craft of defeating evil spirits. In this world, the battle with spirits comes down to a game of guessing your opponent's name. Once you know the name you gain control over the fight. 192pg b&w $9.99

Lupin III: World's Most Wanted Vol 3 (Monkey Punch; graphic novel) Now that he's on the lam, the suave Lupin has a thing or two in his arsenal. When he sets his sights on the royal family's jewels, will he be hard – pressed to penetrate the Queen's secret chamber? Mature readers. 192pg b&w $9.99

Mink Vol 5 (Megumi Tachikawa; graphic novel) Although Mink and Minkie are keeping busy with their concert tour, they are still working to stay one step ahead of cyber-freak Kyo. 192pg b&w $9.99

one-shot **Peach Fuzz** (Jared Hodges & Lindsay Cibos; graphic novel) Amanda is a lonely nine-year old girl whose mother agrees to let her have a pet. Amanda chooses a ferret because ferrets aren't ordinary, and neither is she! 160pg b&w $9.99

Pet Shop of Horrors Vol 10 (Matsuri Akino; graphic novel) When Chris leaves Count D's home, will he like what he finds in the outside world? Mature readers. 192pg b&w $9.99

new **PhD: Phantasy Degree** Vol 1 (Son Hee-Joon; graphic novel) Sang is a fearlessly spunky young girl in search of the Demon School Hades. She convinces a group of misfit monsters to sneak her into a monsters-only class 192pg b&w $9.99

Pita-Ten Vol 7 (Koge Donbo; graphic novel) Grim times await Kotarou, Shia, and Misha as Katorou pays his final respects to his dearly departed grandfather. 192pg b&w $9.99

Priest Vol 14 (Min-Woo Hyung; graphic novel) In his unyielding battle to quench a thirst for vengeance, Ivan Isaac must now do a twisted tango with his most tantalising opponent yet: Zamade, Temozarela's right-hand man. Mature readers. 192pg b&w $9.99

Psychic Academy Vol 6 (Katsu Aki; graphic novel) Ai is in for the fight of a lifetime when two specialists from ADC come the Psychic Academy in search of those that possess the aura of light. 192pg b&w $9.99

The Queen's Knight Vol 2 (Kim Kang Won; graphic novel) Now that Yuna is Queen of Phantasma, the dashing knight Rieno doesn't want her to go back to her home. 192pg b&w $9.99

Remote Vol 4 (Seimaru Amagi & Tetsuya Koshiba; graphic novel) Kurumi has been assigned to act as bodyguard for a punk kid who thinks he can take care of himself, so she pretends to be his personal assistant so he won't know that he has a bodyguard. Mature readers. 192pg b&w $9.99

Saiyuki Vol 6 (Kazuya Minekura; graphic novel) Sanzo's life is on the line. He is stranded in the desert with no way out as Goku desperately searches for a way to save Sanzo from the poison coursing through his veins. Mature readers. 192pg b&w $9.99

Sgt Frog Vol 6 (Mine Yoshizaki; graphic novel) It's an intergalactic battle for the planet when Kororo and company came under attack by a mysterious man and his sidekick. 192pg $9.99

Snow Drop Vol 7 (Choi Kyung-Ah; graphic novel) So-Na's father tells Hae-Gi and So-Na the real reason why he doesn't want them to be with each other. Mature readers. 192pg b&w $9.99

new **Soul to Seoul** Vol 1 (Kim Jea-Eun; graphic novel) Kai feels discriminated against by the Korean side of his family because he is not full-blooded Korean; he is half Korean and half Caucasian. 192pg b&w $9.99

Threads of Time Vol 3 (Mi Young Noh; graphic novel) As the Mongolian Army threatens the prestigious Koryo army, Sa-Le-Ta-Yi, prince and general of the Mongolian Army, has given Koryo an ultimatum: Serve under the Mongolian Army or go to war! 192pg b&w . $9.99

Tokyo Babylon Vol 5 (Clamp; graphic novel) School can be a brutal place, something Kuniko knows firsthand. Classmates beat her, and her teachers can't seem to protect her. When Subaru offers his help, Kuniko finally finds a friendly face. 192pg b&w $9.99

Tokyo Tribes Vol 3 (Santa Inoue; graphic novel) As the rivalry between Mera and Kai rages on, Kai runs into trouble on the home front – and on the homeboy front. Mature readers. 192pg b&w $9.99

Wild Act Vol 10 (Rie Takada; graphic novel) Ryu and Yuniko's life in La-La Land has been an emotional roller coaster, but nothing can prepare them for a shocking revelation that might separate the two lovebirds forever! 192pg b&w $9.99

INTERNATIONAL

Black Library

Warhammer Monthly 86 (various) The triumphant return of the suavest bounty hunter in the underhive, Kal Jerico. The dark thriller *Plaguebringer* comes to its shocking conclusion, and the epic saga of Ephrael Stern continues in *Daemonifuge III*. 40pg b&w $3.50

UK NEWSSTAND

DC Thomson

The Beano 3232-3235 (weekly; various) Classic kids humour anthology featuring Dennis the Menace, the Bash Street Kids, and all your favourites. £0.55

Beano Superstars 154 (various) One complete strip of the long-running humour anthology. 36pg £0.65

Classics from the Comics 100 (various) Reprints classic cartoon strips from Thomson's vintage kids' comics Beano and Dandy. 68pg b&w £1.20

Commando Action and Adventure Stories 3725-3732 (eight per month; digest; various) One complete war strip per issue. Some new. 68pg b&w £1.00

Fun-Size Beano 165-166 (fortnightly; various) Pocket-sized spin-off from the Beano featuring Dennis the Menace and all the usual suspects. 68pg £0.60

Panini Comics

Action Man 117 (four-weekly; various) Action Man travels to central Africa to investigate some strange drumming noises in the heart of the Moujaff jungle!. 36pg £1.75

Astonishing Spider-Man 118 (four-weekly; various) Peter's doting aunt has finally learned that her frail nephew is Spider-Man. 76pg £2.40

Avengers United 47 (four-weekly; various) Continuing The Kang War epic, backed by a reprint from the Avengers archives. 76pg £2.40

Batman: Legends 14 (four-weekly; various) Batman receives a crushing defeat by the Penguin. 76pg £2.40

Cartoon Network 81 (four-weekly; various) Your fave Cartoon Network characters, including Dexter's Laboratory, Johnny Bravo, Powerpuff Girls and loads more! Plus: free gifts, competitions and all the latest toon info. 52pg £1.75

Doctor Who Magazine 350 (four-weekly; Gray & various) Marvel UK's longest running title. Includes a strip, articles, interviews and news on the forthcoming BBC series. 52pg .. £3.40

Essential X-Men 119 (four-weekly; Claremont + Morrison & various) Reprints the adventures of the New X-Men and Team X-Treme, with occasional X-related crossovers. 76pg £2.40

Mighty World of Marvel 22 (four-weekly; various) Classic anthology, featuring Miller and Janson's Daredevil, Thomas and Trimpe's Hulk, plus Nick Fury, Agent of SHIELD by Steranko. 76pg £2.40

Scooby Doo 19 (four-weekly; various) Regular vanquishing of baddies who "would have done it if it weren't for those pesky kids" guaranteed. Also contains competitions, activities, quizzes and more! 36pg £1.99

Spectacular Spider-Man 109-110 (three-weekly; various) Title for younger readers, with games, posters and an original UK strip featuring classic Spidey villains. 36pg £1.50

Tom & Jerry 82 (four-weekly; various) Comic strip stories featuring probably the world's most well known cartoon duo, plus free gifts, puzzles, games, drawing and posters. 36pg £1.99

Ultimate Spider-Man 36 (four-weekly; Bendis & Hairsine + Miki) A double helping of Ultimate Six, featuring The Ultimates and a clutch of Spidey's deadliest foes. 52pg £1.95

Ultimate X-Men 22 (four-weekly; Millar & Finch) The X-Universe re-imagined – everything you thought you knew about the X-Men is wrong! 52pg £1.95

Wolverine & Deadpool 106 (four-weekly; various) Current and classic solo Wolverine tales, now with added insanity from the Merc With The Mouth. .. £1.95

Rebellion

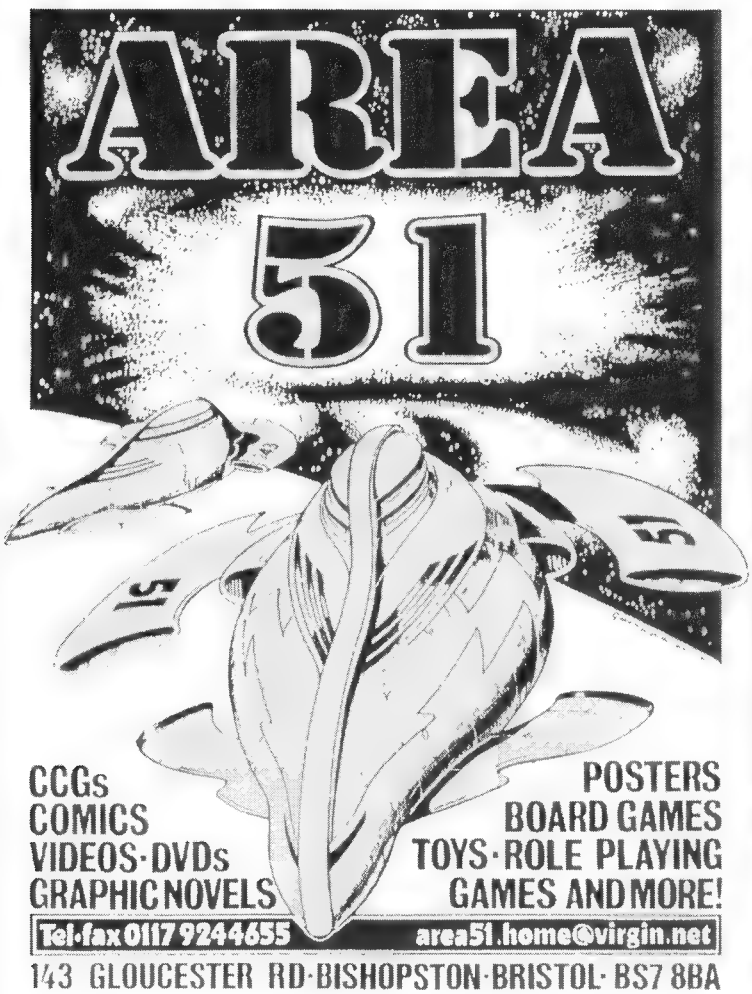
2000AD #1418-1419 (various) Judge Dredd chases down terrorists in *Total War* by John Wagner and Henry Flint, while the alien invasion must be stopped in *Faces* by John Higgins and Mindy Newell. $3.75

2000AD Prog 2005 (various) End-of-year 100-page special issue. Judge Dredd is hunting a notorious serial killer in a seasonal tale by John Wagner and Andrew Currie, while Celtic barbarian Slaine races to save the ancient city of Tara from the sea demons in the fourth *Book of Invasions*. 100pg $10.99

Judge Dredd Megazine 226 (various) Judge Dredd settles a domestic dispute in *Son of the Man* by John Wagner, Patrick Goddard & Dylan Teague, while Shimura settles a Justice Department score in *Executioner* by Robbie Morrison & Andy Clarke. 100pg $10.99

Striker 3D

Striker 68-71 (weekly; Pete Nash + various) Football comic starring the ex-Sun newspaper's Warbury Warriors. Two CGI drawn strips plus reprint of Billy's Boots, old Sun Striker strips and features. £1.50



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On Friday, November 5th, the day before the weekend's Bristol Comic Expo...

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If you work in comics full time, part time or are simply thinking of a career in the industry, this is the event for YOU!

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4pm MIKE PLOOG

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It's completely FREE to register, so call now on 01273 566 222 or simply turn up on the day!

Comment

CI, 345 Ditchling Rd, Brighton BN1 6JJ (comicsinternational@yahoo.co.uk)

Comment is a forum to enable fans and professionals alike to express their personal points of view on aspects of the comics industry. As such, the following opinions do not necessarily reflect those of this publication, but space will be given in subsequent issues to well-reasoned opposing views. Submissions are edited only for grammar, clarity and brevity.

Derek Lord: 1927-2004

Comment by John Ridgway via e-mail

THE name Derek Lord doesn't mean much to people nowadays, but the Eagle Awards acknowledge the quality of **The Eagle**, a paper long-since gone, and with which Derek was responsibly associated.

Derek Edward Gerrard Lord died at 10.10 on Thursday morning September 23 having been rushed into hospital for an emergency operation. He was 77 years old.

I'd known Derek for about five years – from when I contacted him about the possibility of working on the proposed **Eureka** magazine. I spoke with him on the 'phone on the Tuesday morning before he died.

I spoke to him regularly – always on my telephone bill. The only communications I had from him were little notes and postcards. He communicated with everyone that way. His notes are still turning up on my reference desk.

Since that first contact there have been many setbacks and disappointments on **Eureka** but Derek was not the type to give up. For every door that closed he opened another three. He was up-to-date with his information and knew precisely the right person to get in touch with.

Derek was a sub-editor on **The Eagle** at Hulton Press Ltd during the late 1950s and early '60s, rising to chief-sub on **Eagle** and its companion papers, **Girl**, **Swift** and **Robin**. He left **The Eagle** – along with many others – when it was taken over by Longacre Press and the entire ethos of **The Eagle** was changed.

The studio system, by which Frank Hampson had created Dan Dare, was dismantled and the designs – worth millions by today's standards in merchandising – were scrapped. Under Hulton's, the contributing writers and artists had twelve-month contracts. Under Longacre they could be replaced in a moment.

The size of **The Eagle** was reduced, the quality of paper and printing lowered and the number of colour pages cut. **The Eagle** died.

Derek went to work for publisher Paul Hamlyn then onto **Reader's Digest** who were producing a range of books for children. An inheritance then enabled Derek to go freelance, for which he set up Lord Publishing Associates.

Later, as chief-sub for Wolfe Publishing, he worked with the Milk Marketing Board on part of their proposed 200 mini-paperbacks project.

In 1973 he worked with artist Bill Stone on Ocean Interpol for **The Daily Express** then went on to try to develop a replacement for **The Eagle**. Prior to **Eureka** there was to have been **Go**, **Excalibur** and **Terra Nova**, the latter with Ron Embleton, Don Lawrence and Keith Watson.

For various reasons these publications never got off the launching pad.

I met Derek face to face only four times. Although wearing thick glasses, stooped and elderly, he nevertheless impressed me with decisiveness and clarity of thought. He knew what he wanted in **Eureka** and I found that I wanted very much the same.

He wanted to produce something for children (boys and girls) between the ages of 8 and 12 years – an age-group left uncatered for today. Something modern and of lasting quality – a difficult task.

Goodbye, Derek – I'm going to miss you.

Christopher Reeve: 1952-2004

Comment by Tony Ingram, Shotley Gate, Ipswich

OCTOBER 2004, and so the comics industry loses yet another of its greatest stars – and he wasn't even anything to do with the comics industry!

Superman is, of course, an icon, not just in America but worldwide, and for a whole generation of us rabid comics fans, Christopher Reeve *was* Superman, the living embodiment of the character Curt Swan drew for our reading pleasure several times a month.

I still remember going to see

Superman The Movie with my father, more than 25 years ago – one of the greatest memories of my childhood.

And yet, Supes saving the ever-irritating Margot Kidder from falling to her doom pales in comparison to what Chris accomplished for millions of disabled people worldwide after his accident nine years ago, becoming a beacon of hope just because he never gave up hope.

How cruel, that Chris was taken from us so young, without ever living his dream of walking again. And how appropriate, given what we knew of him, that he never ever gave up on that dream.

Wherever Chris is now, I trust that he's flying, because, cape or no cape, he *was* Superman.

A vote for the Punisher (on DVD!)

Comment by Richard Domar, Wolverhampton

WHEN I read that *The Punisher* DVD would be out in the US two weeks before the UK cinema release, well, I just had to order the Yank copy for £16.

It arrived on Friday September 3rd, and I watched it that evening accompanied by three tins of Amber Nectar and some whisky.

The next day **CI** #176 arrived with Mike Conroy's review of the film, which says it all, but I will add my own observations plus some facts too, as I totally disagree about Tom Jane in the title role being wooden, superficial and boring. He played a difficult part, a man with nothing to live for, and he did it well. Plus he did a lot of his own stunts.

The death of Frank's wife and kid was straight out of *Mad Max*, while the climax could well have been a director's cut of *Raw Deal*.

OK, so there's not too much wrong with this, but three things made no sense to me: how did the killer know that Frank was eating at some cafe at that precise time? How did the mobsters know his address? And, more importantly, why did Frank Castle go to all that trouble to set up Saint's right-hand man and Saint's wife? Saint was a sociopath who could not in any way be guaranteed to do what he did. You'll know what I mean when you see the film. It smacks of complications and again we know he would not take the risk with a plan that is not 100% guaranteed.

As a fan of action movies, I give this five out of 10. As a fanboy who has read nearly every **Punisher** comic, I give it one for effort. The film is introducing the public to a Marvel character, and I think the sequel will be better.

The film is based on Garth Ennis's series *Welcome Back Frank*. Jonathan Hensleigh directed the movie and also wrote it with Michael France. Extras on the DVD last about 80 minutes. Plus there's a commentary by Hensleigh. That gives the DVD over five hours. The commentary adds several points to the film, gives it a four, and gives the film substance.

I'll mention a few things we learn. Hensleigh was given just $30 million and 50 days to shoot. That's a third of the size of a usual action pic, and hardly enough time for post-production, let alone CGI effects! It explains something. Draw your own conclusions.

Because of the budget limitation, they removed 35 minutes of a subplot that might have made the film better.

My *Mad Max* observation is mentioned in the commentary, so I was right about that, but I'd have preferred to see the death of the family done the same way as in the comics origins. You also get an explanation why Frank sets up the two people closest to Saint.

Mike Conroy's review concludes that you give the film a miss. On its own I'd have to agree, but don't miss the DVD! The commentary is above average for plot and filming info.

Personally, I always enjoy listen to commentariess and have the film's subtitles on so I can follow the movie a second time around.

Reviving the UK Golden Age

Comment by Sean Naylor, Smethwick, West Midlands

MUCH as I enjoy the four colour antics in American comicbooks, I've increasingly become more interested in old British comics. Not only is it pure nostalgia, but generally speaking, back issues are much cheaper than US ones.

So when I saw your cover mention (**CI** #177) to Alan Moore reviving Fleetway's "classic comics heroes", I was thrilled.

When I read that WildStorm doesn't have faith in launching more than a miniseries, I despaired. While the characters were firmly timelocked in the 20th century and probably need reinventing for a contemporary US audience, I only wish that they didn't all have to be thrown into the same "universe" with their future being dictated by probably no more than the sales orders of a first issue.

Given that Moore's ABC titles don't deliver the numbers they deserve, if it's only a middling seller then what? Will our entire history be consigned to the same bin as DC's Impact/Archie and Charlton duds? They're worth more.

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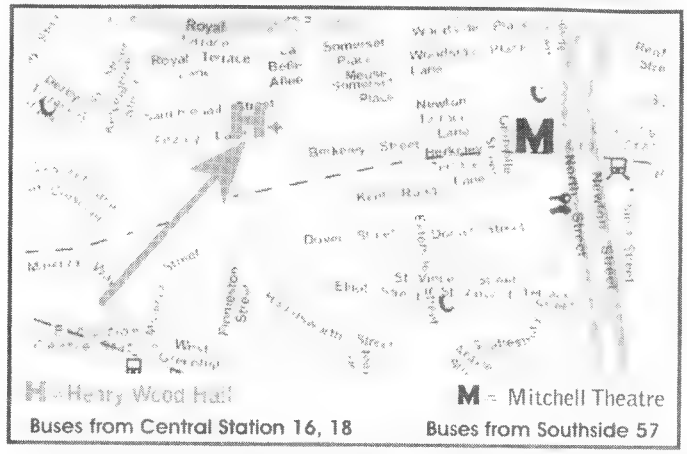

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Reviews

Because few retailers allow titles to be read before purchase, CI's comprehensive reviews section enables comics readers to keep abreast of the wide range of titles currently being published and draw readers' attention to comics they might otherwise ignore. Naturally, this section is of even greater benefit to readers who rely solely on mail order, as they can only judge the quality of a title after purchase.

***Review codes:** Individual titles are judged against all similar comics past and present on a **1** to **10** basis, while a comparison is made against previous issues of the same title, ranging from <---> to <+++>. Hence, a quality comic may score an 8 against all others, but have slid from a previous issue's 9, denoted by <->. No change is marked <=>. We do not compare **Bone** with **X-Men**, but review each within their genre.*

***Review panel:** Chris E. Bunting (CEB), Jon Edwards (JE), Kelvin Green (KG), David Knight (DK), Dominic McDonagh (DM), Keiron Mullens (KM), Tom McSween (TM), Ian Murphy (IM), Rob Nott (RN), Leonie O'Moore (LO), Alex Thompson (MAT)*

Dark Horse

Conan 8

by Busiek & Ruth

<+> Far away from the recent god awful one shot, the regular title continues to do justice to Robert E Howard's original vision. This is the first of a regular series of fill in issues showing Conan's early childhood, but a fill in issue of a very high standard. Greg Ruth's art is very different to that of the regular artist but his style suits the book extremely well with its murky tones and realistic settings. Conan is the best comic Dark Horse has in its stable at the moment. (RN) 8

Conan and the Daughters of Midora 1

by Palmiotti & Texiera + Madsen

Success is a double-edged sword in the world of comics. On the one hand it allows a quality title to continue with a long lifespan, but the flip side is you get bloody awful cash ins like this one. So it's 'hello again' to the bad old days of '80s hack Marvel art and plots that you can scribble on the back of a match box. If you ever wondered why mid-'80s Conan was so bad, then look no further. This is a quick cash in on the success of the quality monthly, and Dark Horse risks destroying the reputation of its fledgling new series if this turns out to be the tip of a particularly unwelcome iceberg. (RN) 3

The Goon 8

by Powell

<=> A group of poncey vampire-wannabes call upon the spirit of an accused bloodsucker femme fatale to take down the hard-man-with-a-heart. Will he be able to resist her macabre charms? With cartoony artwork and farcical characters, yet moody moments, Eric Powell mixes his brand of slapstick toilet humour with introspective gothic drama in another surprisingly downbeat episode. Fortunately Powell's retort to the critical acclaim of Eisner Award nominations brings things back down to earth. (MAT) 8

DC Comics

Batgirl 56

by Horrocks & Huddleston + Delperdang

In another instalment of the *War Games* crossover, there's a fantastically well executed scene where Batgirl puts a stop to a mob sniper, before she goes on to defend Dr Leslie's free clinic in a more prosaic martial arts fashion. Hush meets the villain orchestrating the violence, and drops a bombshell. Nice, atmospheric art from Mike Huddleston and Jesse Delperdang is more than serviceable, and lifts the story somewhat. (DK) 6

Batman Gotham Knights 57

by Lieberman & Barrionuevo + Portela

<---> It's a let down for regular readers, as too many concessions are made to the *War Games* crossover, and the focus shifts to events that have little bearing on what has occurred in *Gotham Knights* lately. Spoiler and Tarantula each get their turn centrestage, and there are some surprising revelations regarding the inspiration behind the gang war, but it's a device that's been used before. (DK) 5

Books of Magic 4

by Spencer & Ormston; Vertigo

<+> The best run of Gaiman's rather lame character yet, largely because Si Spencer has concentrated on the supporting cast instead of the protagonist. This works well, as does the fact that Hunter's finally been allowed to pass through adolescence. The steadily growing sense of menace is very effective and the art isn't half bad, either. (DM) 8

Caper 11

by Winick & Fowler

<+> Gangsters interrogate hostile drag queen Cleopatrick Stewart, while a pornographer uses his employees to try to persuade Lou and Richie to give him the frozen hand. This Judd Winick surreal, screwball comedy – now peppered with crazy anal and oral sex metaphors stranger than you might imagine – is tasteless and sleazy and wonderful. Tom Fowler looks like he had great fun pencilling such visual jokes as a half shot off afro and an invading horde of bikini and gun sporting bodyguards. Very strange and very much fun, this insane book rocks. (IM) 8

Caper 12

by Winick & Fowler

<-> Lou and Richie, captured by the mob, discover the origins of the hand and attempt to escape before they're tortured. Judd Winick has plotted a hugely enjoyable series, readily mixing dark drama with slapstick humour in this final arc, but the OTT ending betrays all that. The farcical escape plan, the gun-toting cavalry, it's too much more of a send up of superhero comics than the plot and this reader can take. A disappointing end of an otherwise fine series whose finest moments were all in the first two, completely independent, story arcs. (IM) 6

Catwoman 1

by Loeb & Sale

The new Catwoman mini has a strong Fellini-esque La Dolce Vita look going for it, courtesy of the period pencils of Tim Sale. And it is the sweet life indeed, as Catwoman and Rome and a pseudo late '50s setting is a polygamous marriage made in heaven. If the first issue is anything to go by, this is the cat that has all the cream. (RN) 8

DC: The New Frontier Book 6

by Cooke & Stewart

<=> Predictably, the heroes unite to save the world. This is an intelligently-written and gorgeous-looking comic, but I can't help but feel that the main action is a disappointment as we reach the climax. But perhaps that was never the point, as the many subtleties in this book shine. (KG) 8

Ex Machina 4

by Vaughan & Harris + Feister; WildStorm

<=> One of the best new series that any DC imprint has launched in recent years. The art of Tony Harris is nothing short of magnificent, and the scripting too shows just how versatile a writer Mr Vaughan can be. I'm particularly fond of superhero-lite stories, so this tale of an ex-cape and tights mayor strikes all the right chords for me. Definitely a superhero comic for people who've grown jaded with superhero comics. (RN) 7

Fallen Angel volume 1

by David & Lopez + Blanco; $12.95

"Fallen Angel" – whatever that means – Lee tracks down a monstrous being that's fulminating locals in the lawless city of Bete Noire. This book's first six issues, collected here, have an energy and air of menace that beguiles. While much remains unexplained, they are teasing, exciting mysteries rather than annoying absences, and Peter David's script crackles with tension through ambiguous alliances. Penciller David Lopez struggles to balance human drama with supernatural elements; his faces and figures can appear stilted, and he fails to convincingly portray gore, but scenes of conflict and suspense burn bright. Fernando Blanco's inks add to the menacing, dark air, and overall this trio has made a potent start. (IM) 7

Human Target 14

by Milligan & Chiang; Vertigo

<+> A religious 'saviour' wants a few days away from his minders; but when Chance impersonates him as a favour, the angry father of one of his converts comes gunning for him. Peter Milligan's plots are sometimes better in execution than in idea, but the meticulous characterisation and first-class dialogue ensures an enthralling read. Cliff Chiang's reliably good artwork continues to impress, alongside Lee Loughridge's dramatically memorable colours. (IM) 8

I Am Legion: The Dancing Faun

by Nury & Cassaday; Humanoids

A select group of investigators is assembled to investigate the death of a British aristocrat, but what does his death have to do with Nazi experiments on a young Transylvanian girl? John Cassaday brings his cleanly detailed art to Humanoids Publishing, collaborating with Fabien Nury to tell a tale of conspiracies, undercover agents, Nazi experimentation, and supernatural forces during the Second World War. Cassaday's art looses nothing by being squeezed from the European album to American comics format, whilst Nury's script sets the scene for an exciting series. (MAT) 8

JLA 106

by Austen & Garney

<-> For a finale to the six-part *Pain Of The Gods* story arc, Chuck Austen and Ron Garney reveal the legacy of meta-human powers in the family of the emergent superhero Superman couldn't save. Unfortunately, by now most readers will be too bored and exhausted to care. Thank goodness we're spared Batman's crisis of faith, as we're all too familiar with the particular crosses he bears. (DK) 5

A Life During Wartime 3

by Spencer & Ormston; Vertigo

<=> The latest incarnation of the Books of Magic is a radical reboot. Gone is the Tolkien obsessed Tim Hunter, and instead we now have Slacker Tim, with his techno records and occasional drug habit. There's a war raging on some parallel Earth where John Constantine is defending the siege of Krakow against a demon army, and his sometime girlfriend Zatanna is wheeling and dealing in a Casablanca-like occupied Jerusalem. Readers have been thrown into the middle of this and left to sink or swim for themselves, but the approach is interesting and has enough deft touches to keep my attention for a while yet. (RN) 7

The Losers 16

by Diggle & Jock; Vertigo

<=> As the team winds its way to the UK, Clay

Adam Strange 1

by Diggle & Ferry

Adam Strange is stranded on Earth once more, but this time it's different. The zeta-beam fails to turn up because Rann just isn't there any more. With Rann gone supernova, there's no planetary romance, but writer Andy Diggle concentrates on setting up a Mystery in Space instead. Pascal Ferry's delicate art, coloured by Dave McCraig, is a pleasure. (DK) 7

Wow. This looks amazing, and a lot of that is down to the astonishing colour scheme. As far as revamps go, this is very good – a down and out Adam Strange, stranded on Earth, is grieving the loss of his wife, his child and his adopted planet, Rann when the uglies strike. Diggle certainly knows how to tell a story and here he has succeeded in getting me interested in an old DC character that never appealed to me in the past. A brilliant first issue. (RN) 8

relates to the tenacious Aisha the story behind his guèrrilla group's final mission in Afghanistan and their connection to the mysterious Max. After a few replacement artists, it's great to see Jock return to the drawing board. With his grungy brush strokes and stylish design he brings the required atmosphere to Andy Diggle's effortlessly cool scripts. (MAT) 8

Lucifer 54

by Carey & Gross + Kelly; Vertigo

<+> Much to my surprise, the Fenris story doesn't end in anticlimax. As an exercise in Sandman milking, Lucifer tends towards epic fantasy, but Mike Carey's at his best as a horror writer. Here he fuses the two approaches seamlessly. The scenes of a possessed Lucifer are genuinely terrifying, and for once, the threat to all that exists doesn't seem contrived. (DM) 7

Majestic 3

by Abnett & Lanning + Kerschl

<=> This chapter starts with great urgency and pathos, as Majestic's blown cover precipitates drama. Ellen is calm and collected but stern with the alien living under her roof, and helps him through his amnesia, while the twin threats of a Daemonite monster and the Eradicator close in. Good stuff. But DC, take note: big advertising inserts are annoying, and interrupt the flow of a good story. (DK)7

Manhunter 1

by Andreyko & Saiz + Palmiotti

A new take on the old DC character; one of those 'driven to become a superhero' stories with no explanation why the non-powered person suddenly becomes the equivalent of Batman as soon as she puts on a pair of coloured tights. Sadly, for a debut issue it fails to make a significant impression and I was left feeling the title is probably destined for 'c' grade celebrity status. It feels like an OK book that may risk being cancelled by issue 15, which would be a shame. (RN) 6

Outsiders 15

by Winick & Raney

The 'Fearsome Five' has Lex Luthor's nukes and plan to bomb... Canada? I find Judd Winick's straightforward superheroics modestly enjoyable, but these days I need more than that to part with my money. The plot is appallingly thin, but the writing is blessed by a typically smart, witty script. Tom Raney's pencil and inks leave too many faces looking vacant and are in places too tightly inked, but Gina Going's delectable colours add texture and sophistication, covering up most artistic flaws. Competent, but eminently forgettable. (IM) 5

Michael Moorcock's Elric 1

by Moorcock & Simonson

This is an awful lot better than Michael Moorcock's last comic for DC, and is well worth investigating if you like fantasy fiction. There's a lot less of the uneasy farting about that he's resorted to in his fantasy fiction of late than there was in Multiverse and Walter Simonson's art is a thing of beauty and wonder. It's a pity that anybody who isn't a rabid Elric fan won't bother with this. (DM) 7

Moorcock's last project for DC was an unmitigated disaster, so I approached this new Elric book with a sense of trepidation. Rather more straight edge and reverential to its source material than the Multiverse miniseries was, this comic is set prior to the first (chronological) Elric stories. Moorcock seeks to explain the back story of Melnibone through a series of dream quests, but like his recent prose fiction, Moorcock these days is treading over old ground. What was once sharp and original is now sounding overly familiar, and in truth this is for Elric completists only. (RN) 5

Plastic Man 10

by Baker

<=> Plas and his reformed wife take a break in the countryside, but find they have to take refuge at a spooky house with a suspiciously hospitable host and his vampish daughter. Will our hero survive the forces of the night? Kyle Baker plays up all the hammy vampire clichés with his gag strip humour and cartoony artwork. Brilliantly entertaining for young and old comic fans alike. (MAT) 7

Robin 130

by Willingham & Camuncoli + Ruggiero

<-> Spoiler tackles the Black Mask alone, but takes on more than she can handle, and before you know it, writer Bill Willingham is gunning for an entry on the *Women in Refrigerators* website (if you've never seen it, check it out). Meanwhile, Tim speaks up for Stephanie while filling in for her as Robin. Willingham's writing is consistently good, and here it continues to be thoughtful, intelligent and chilling. (DK) 7

Superman 209

by Azzarello & Lee + Williams

<=> Nice art, shame about the plot. Jim Lee's overhaul of the Superman flagship stumbles along at a snail's pace, leaving faithful readers wondering when this is going to lead somewhere. It's possible the story will come across better in one hit as a thick graphic novel but as a monthly title it leaves a lot to be desired. It certainly doesn't help either that Jim Lee has failed to make Superman an interesting character. He remains essentially passionless and dull. (RN) 5

Swamp Thing 8

by Pfeifer & Corben; Vertigo

<-> After last issue's intriguing introduction of a cryptozoologist and monster hunter searching for Swampy, Will Pfeifer takes the plot on an odd turn by introducing a fallen angel, supposedly behind the search, and an inquisitive schoolmate of Swampy's resurrected daughter. These introductions confuse the story, leaving the muck monster as a bystander to events. Still, at least Richard Corben's chunky artwork remains of the same high standard. (MAT) 7

The Witching 4

by Vankin & Gallagher + Randall; Vertigo

<+> This continues to improve, and again mixes nasty humour, luscious artwork and crisp dialogue into an appealing concoction. Four issues in, the plotting is starting to seem a little less strained as well, now that the characters and the situation are established. There's also a fine cliffhanger here, which is always a bonus. (DM) 8

Y – The Last Man 27

by Vaughan & Guerra + Marzan Jr

<++> Having reached San Francisco, Dr Mann experiments, and Yorick gets his ring stolen – which unfortunately appears to have more importance than an engagement ring should. Brian K Vaughan's plot turns readers 180 degrees in a most delightful fashion. He adds in excellent comedy flourishes – Yorick as a basketball game mascot – and scripted asides to make this a wonderfully written book. Pia Guerra's pencils are great at portraying the uncertain situation, and do equally well here on a fluid action sequence. (IM) 8

Image

Deep Sleeper 4

by Hester & Huddleston

<=> Calder's wandering spirit finds a new home, and armed with the newfound realisation of his destiny he turns the tables on the sinister Ramman's efforts to break through the barriers of the mental and physical worlds. Phil Hester's script may seem rather new-agey, but has parallels with The Matrix with its mix of action and philosophy. Mike Huddleston's dynamically expressive inking brings life to the pages, but also captures the more human moments of the plot. (MAT) 7

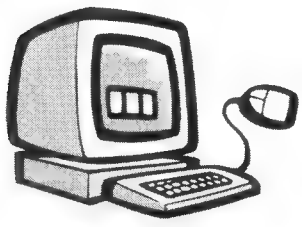
Invincible 16

by Kirkman & Ottley

<=> Too many subplots to summarise here, I'm afraid! This is easily my favourite mainstream superhero comic right now, with great art, and wonderful character writing. There hasn't been a main plot for a while now, but one or two of the subplots have become very interesting... (KG) 8

<=> In a dramatic opening *volte face*, Invincible sides with his father and conquers the world for the Viltrumite Empire. But what exactly is Dr Angstrom up to? In another place, the Guardians of the Globe ineptly combat an alien invasion, and Damien Darkblood also struggles to be taken seriously. Whatever you do, check out Nate Bellegarde's splendid illustrations of a hypothetical range of collectables, the Invincipals! Cute as a button. (DK) 8

<=> The Guardians repel a new alien invasion, with unidentified help – and a bitter Robot is sacked as leader. With numerous sub-plots flying free, Robert Kirkman's book is an exciting and promising read. I'm especially intrigued by the suggestion that it may not have been Omni-Man who slaughtered the original Guardians after all. Ryan Ottley's visuals are charming in their simplicity –



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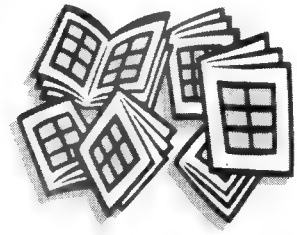

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reflecting the old-school feel of this book – but it's Robert Kirkman's scripting and plotting that consistently hook me. (IM) 7

Liberty Meadows Sourcebook 1

by Frank Cho

Every significant character – from majors like Brandy to minors such as the Evil Squirrels and Khan the Catfish get a brief description, a re-run of a strip featuring one of their finest moments. *Scenes from the Cutting Room Floor* has some genuinely funny scenes, but otherwise the material is pretty thin: there's not enough old material to charm new readers, and not enough new stuff to reward older ones, so this book fails both. (IM) 5

Savage Dragon 117

by Larsen

<++> Erik Larsen succeeds in injecting some life into his labour-of-love title, by parodying romance comics, both with his endearingly funny cover, and with She-Dragon's infatuated narration running through the story. The humour is by turns gentle and laugh out loud funny; and the latest enemy Savage Dragon takes on bears absolutely no resemblance to Swamp Thing. Honest! (DK) 7

Wanted 5

by Millar & Jones; Top Cow

<+> It's a strange turn of events when a supervillain assassin who kills and rapes for kicks becomes the hero by opposing a criminal cartel with plans to throw away the peaceful status quo that has endured for 18 years. As wrong as it undoubtedly is, seeing Wesley Gibson gun down an army of familiarly costumed crooks is peculiarly exhilarating. (DK) 9

Ultra 1

by the Luna Brothers

Now this is how to begin a series! Three fashionable women in a car coming back from a night on the town spend the evening chatting about their lives and decide to stop off in a run down neighbourhood when they see a sign for a fortune teller. To say any more would be to give away the twist, but needless to say the issue reads like an excellent pre-credit sequence to a must-see new TV series and certainly left me wanting more. (RN) 9

The Walking Dead 11

by Kirkman & Adlard + Rathburn

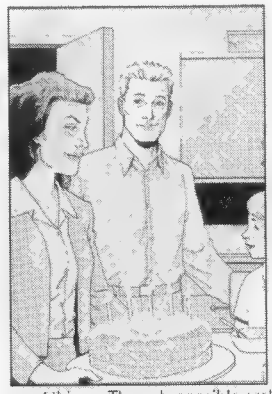
<=> Keeping zombies in a barn is a sure fire recipe for disaster, but of course it's just the sort of thing that stupid expendable supporting characters would do to further the plot. And of course they get out. And of course there are deaths. Still a thumping good read, but you sometimes feel like screaming at the rank stupidity of the characters who on the whole seem destined for a short life as walking zombie bait. (RN) 7

Marvel

Alpha Flight 8

by Lobdell & Ross + McKenna

<=> Versus 'space wax' mannequins of much of the Marvel universe, which somehow also possess the relevant powers, except durability. I wonder how long Scott Lobdell thinks he can get away with such atrocious, mindless plotting? Dialogue feels uncomfortable, the plot simplistic, and characters lack depth and believability. Artists Dave Ross and Mark McKenna try to make something from this mess, but struggle when scenes suddenly shift from tired, unfunny comedy to cod-suspenseful drama. I love Alpha Flight and its history – but surely there was a better way to revive the title than this? I'm outta here. (IM) 2



Hellblazer 200

by Mike Carey & various; Vertigo

There's no way to review this without spoilers, so be warned. It's nice to see Mike Carey writing Hellblazer as horror, when it could easily be merely fantasy. John Constantine, homeless and amnesiac, swaps a succubus one day of his life in exchange for his memories back, but gets a lot more than he bargained for. He gets the memories of several lives, lived with different women, fathering several children. (DK) 8

<+> After a slightly limp recent few issues, this looks like being back on track. Three riffs on the same conceit are dovetailed together with a nice rationale, setting up the next story line, and this one promises great things. The only possible problem might be that the rest of the story won't measure up to the curtain raiser's mixture of creeping unease and weird violence. Guest artists abound, as is traditional for milestone issues, but in this case, Frusin's art impresses more than Dillon's, which is unexpected. (DM) 8

<++> An excellent example of how an anniversary issue should be done. It brings back memories of the classic issue 40 as John Constantine is tormented by illusions of what his life might have turned out like with three ex-girlfriends from his past. And by the end of the issue it becomes apparent that there is a good solid point to all of this. It's not simply a gimmick issue designed to fit in a 200th issue – Carey has established a future plot line that promise to bring further chaos into our embittered mage's life. Without a doubt this is Carey's best issue to date. (RN) 9

Amazing Spider-Man 512

by Straczynski & Deodato

<-> The true father of Gwen Stacy's children is finally revealed. While the impressive, photo-realistic visuals are maybe a touch too wooden for the energetic, fanciful world of superheroes, J. Michael Straczynski undoubtedly proves a damn fine writer. However, it's arguable that such audacious revelatory tampering with the classic continuity of Marvel's heyday, no matter how expertly executed, is perhaps strained and tired. What next? Uncle Ben was secretly a Skrull! (JE) 8

<-> The father of the "spider-children" is revealed, and Spidey's world is turned upside-down. The art is awful, but the thing that everyone's talking about is the story. What we get here is an extreme bit of retconning which is bound to drive long-time fans wild, but I think it's an interesting development. (KG) 7

<=> Straczynski proves he's a true world class writer by making an entire issue of talking heads not only absorbing, but appealing. This is in part helped by the subject matter, which sees new light thrown on old events, especially the death of Gwen Stacy period. Revelations abound in this title's continued renaissance. (CEB) 8

Astonishing X-Men 5

by Whedon & Cassaday

<=> I've said it before, and I'll say it again: the best Marvel comics are those that fully respect what has gone before while adding – no, improving on – it with personal and inventive vision. J. Michael Straczynski's Amazing Spider-Man, Mark Waid's Fantastic Four, and now Joss Whedon's Astonishing X-Men. These flagship titles are after all built on soap opera elements, and therein lies the reason that you never see *Coronation Street*, *Eastenders*, or *Neighbours* even, do a retcon! (CEB) 8

<=> The X-Men briefly gain the upper hand, before an unexpected force arrives. This is still very well-written stuff, with nice moments of humour and good character work. John Cassaday's art is a bit weaker this issue, looking more conventional and less Cassaday-like, and he's clearly having trouble portraying Colossus. (KG) 7

<+> Kitty tries to understand how the man whose ashes she disposed of is in front of her; and the team takes on Ord. Whedon's dialogue is frequently smart, funny and memorably poignant. The plot may feel pretty ordinary, but it's executed with style and enthusiasm for the characters. Cassaday's art is frequently beguiling; although the last pages lack his usual finesse, the panel where Beast grabs Kavita by the throat is one of a number of particularly impressive moments. (IM) 8

<=> According to a recent chocolate ad, our happiness takes the form of a cute, pleasure-seeking, fluffy furred animal. If this is true, then my particular talking cat is currently on the sofa purring through this, for it is indeed blessed by the hand of Whedon. The guilty pleasure I get from reading this is the same I got from reading the Byrne/Claremont run many moons ago. Whedon is a master when it comes to writing stylised genre fiction. The comic screams 'tights and capes at its most basic' but when the writing is this good, you feel justified in racking this with your more highbrow art. All hail the Whedon… (RN) 8

<=> After the surprise resurrection of Colossus to appease hard-core X-Fans, Cassaday makes a subtle swipe at the newly costumed heroes, before Peter fights back against his tormentors. Whedon's smart scripting and Cassaday's smooth art manage to negate the passé return to spandex and more traditional heroics. Even this cynical reviewer's neck hairs stood up in places… (MAT) 7

The Avengers 502

by Bendis & Finch + Miki

<-> A Kree army attacks the Avengers apparently leading to the much-hyped fatality. Much here doesn't yet make sense – for example, The Avengers are joined in battle by Skrulls in two panels, but no Avenger comments on that unexplained ally – and this baffles both readers and Avengers rather than pricking curiosity. The artwork is frequently pretty dire – a bloodily bold and distancing red colour wash; David Finch's figures often look unfinished and are sometimes barely recognisable, or static and blank. Unusually for Bendis, there's some awful dialogue. The whole issue is a mess. (IM) 4

<-> The madness continues as Avengers past and present rally around in the team's hour of need: before the day is out the Kree invade and a member sacrifices their life (as so prominently paraded on the cover!). Critics of Brian Michael Bendis's dialogue-heavy scripts really have nothing to complain about here as this story is one of his most action-packed yet. Finch's dynamically muscular artwork captures the conflict and these heavyweight heroes brilliantly. (MAT) 8

Captain America & The Falcon 8

by Priest & DiVito + Koblish

<++> Modok – perhaps regenerated by the Navy – is killing AIM agents; and Robbie Robertson suggests to Cap that Falcon is out of control and may have tried to kill him earlier. Priest's plotting is modest in the analysis, but in the reading it feels like an exciting, busy book – and one which is increasingly grabbing me with its blend of mystery, conspiracies and action. Transparency Digital's colours are too gaudy and thus suppress Andrea DiVito's vivid pencils. With relaxed colours DiVito's work might be more striking and memorable, although the start made here is already promising. (IM) 6

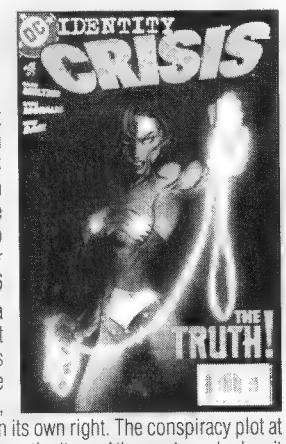
Daredevil 64

by Bendis & Maleev; Marvel Knights

<+> Can Daredevil outwit both Jigsaw, who's at his house looking for revenge, and Black Widow's would-be assassin? Brian Michael Bendis here shows why his reputation for strong dialogue is so deserved, giving an

Identity Crisis 4

by Meltzer & Morales + Bair



<-> The DC heroes attempt to track down the killer, but are way out of their depth and clutching at straws. Writer Brad Meltzer keeps up the tension and maintains a wide-angle view of the DC universe, creating opportunities for cameos both good and really stupid. After the indignities the heroes and their intimates have been subjected to in recent issues, this one offers some comfort for sensitive readers. (DK) 6

<=> This is that very rare thing in comics – a miniseries with a solid reason for existing in the first place. Whereas most minis are either vanity projects or commercial attempts to sell a few more magazines on the back of an existing popular title, Identity Crisis succeeds as a fully fledged work in its own right. The conspiracy plot at the heart of the title makes sense in the light of past continuity, and the mystery whodunnit elements are expertly handled by Meltzer. An excellent package let down only by the average art. (RN) 7

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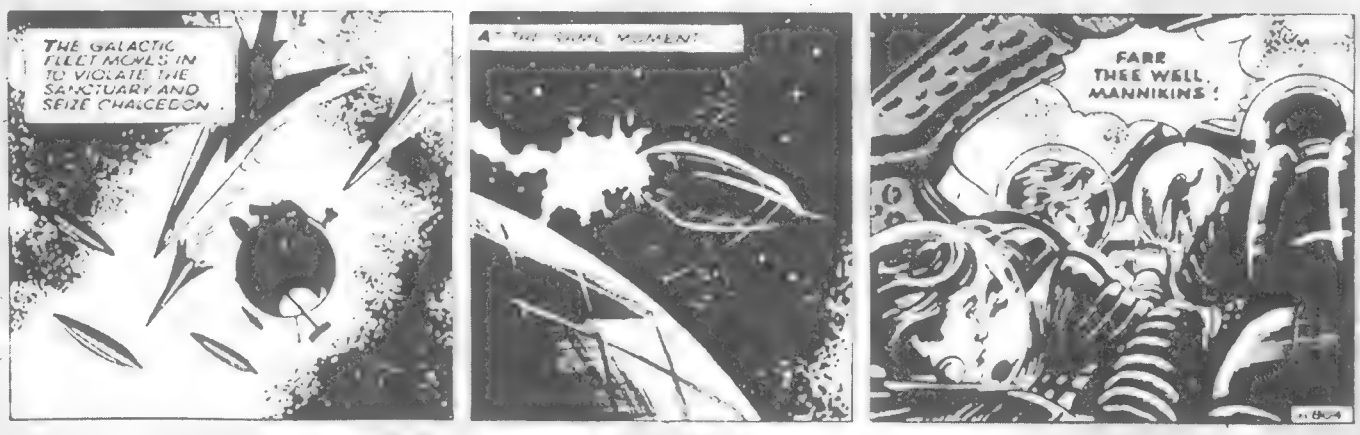

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ordinary plot weight and a beguiling nature, and using the circumstances to illuminate characters and motivation. With half-lit streets looking more dangerous than his bad guys, Alex Maleev continues his superb form, abetted by Dave Stewart's fetching colours, which loosely drape streets in the colour of the police sirens. I'm running out of words to describe how amazing this book is (IM) 9

<=> Every Bendis issue of DD has something magical going for it, and here it's the sight of Jigsaw storming Matt Murdock's home, with gunmen along for the ride. Realising that any attempt to defend himself will draw attention to his secret identity, Matt decides instead to simply hide on the roof and call the police. The first time he's ever resorted to that, and of course the cops think it's a hoax call. That and they tell him to put his tights on and sort the baddies out himself! Priceless. (RN) 8

<=> Bendis brings his latest storyline to a conclusion as the mutilated gangster Jigsaw invades Matt Murdock's home; but he doesn't reckon on Matt's partner on the run Black Widow using her feminine charm to take down the intruders. Matt takes a backseat on the action, but faces the emotional turmoil of his failed marriage. Bendis shows equal skill with both the spy thriller and more poignant moments, while Maleev's cool and moody art continues to astound. (MAT) 8

Daredevil 65

by Bendis & various; Marvel Knights

<-> Recapping the 14 months since Matt Murdock outed himself, including meetings with Nick Fury, Spider-Man, Captain America, The Punisher and Dr Strange. The range of artists in this 40th anniversary special is impressive. Chris Bachalo and Tim Townsend's Dr Strange has a memorably distinguished but vulnerable look, Michael Golden's Matt Murdock carries echoes of Ben Affleck, striking a formidable, unbowing pose, while Phil Hester and Ande Parks provide more drama, tension and edge on their Punisher-Daredevil encounter than I've seen in any of their other work. The artistic weakness lies in Greg Horn's painted scenes, which look flat and are hampered by truckloads of text. As for Brian Michael Bendis's writing, it's an interesting addition to recent storylines, offering helpful insights into the road thus far travelled and welcoming new readers (IM) 8

<=> Another anniversary issue – Daredevil's 40th in fact – and Bendis takes the double sized opportunity to skip through key points in Matt's missing year since his secret identity was outed by the press. As we've come to expect from Bendis, the writing is absolutely top dog, and dialogue and characterisation seem effortless in his hands. The succession of guest artists are given enough pages each to make an impact, and like the 200th issue of Hellblazer this is a good lesson in how to do anniversary issues and do them well. Bendis is so talented, we should have him stuffed and mounted on a wall when he's dead. (RN) 8

<-> A bevy of artists is called upon to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the Man Without Fear as Bendis looks back at recent events in the character's life, filling in gaps with some gratuitous guest stars. Golden draws a mean Nick Fury, Hester's Punisher is sufficiently beefy, while Bachalo's quirky style is impeccably suited to Dr Strange. Bendis could write this kind of script in his sleep, with only the conclusion hinting at his skill at portraying characters in a fresh light. (MAT) 7

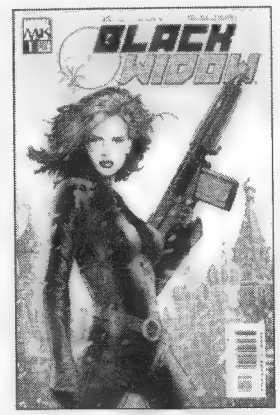
Doctor Spectrum 2

by Barnes & Foreman + Dell + Geraci

<++> The crystal and Joe bond, in his subconscious, which explores his upbringing and offers frightening insights into Mark's alien origins. Sara "Samm" Barnes' plot moves forward beyond the slow, predictable opener, and her dialogue meticulously informs the plot whilst revealing character motivations. Travis Foreman's pencils are versatile, with imposing, ominous mental flashes of Mark, tight present-day lines and free, light panels of Joe's childhood; Studio F's colours frequently hit the perfect note, be it alarming menace or unwelcome recollection. A big up on a disappointing first issue. (IM) 7

Black Widow 1

by Morgan & Sienkiewicz; Marvel Knights



Natasha, on the run with old friend Phil, heads for Alabama to investigate the murder of a former KGB agent. Richard K. Morgan's plot might sound hackneyed, but this high-octane story illuminates personality and excites in ways I didn't think spy books could thrill me these days. Morgan's script is invigorated, flashily dressing up familiar scenes, but Bill Sienkiewicz's painted art expands everything, powerfully illustrating every scene and emphasising the tension and uncertainties of the script. Dan Brown's colours are magnificent – vivid or subdued as needed– and crown a stunning first issue. (IM) 8

The Black Widow has always been one of my favourite heroines, and the recent Bendis version of her was absolutely spot on in all the right places. Now she gets another miniseries, this time with art by Sienkiewicz (always a welcome prospect), but sadly the writer doesn't share Bendis's grasp of Natasha. What we have is a perfectly acceptable action/road movie with a high kicking heroine who could just as easily be anyone. If you've been waiting a long time for a good solo Black Widow story, sadly this isn't it. (RN) 5

Excalibur 5

by Claremont & Lopresti + Adams

<+> The X-Corps offices in Mumbai are blown up, and a pirate comes to plunder Genosha's remaining assets. Chris Claremont is finding his feet with this book, opening up intriguing sub-plots and re-introducing old friends such as Sabra, Lifeguard and Thunderbird III alongside new allies and villains. Aaron Lopresti's pencils are hit and miss but largely successful, and while Greg Adams' inks are powerfully dark and tarry on foreboding scenes. An improving book. (IM) 6

Exiles 53

by Bedard & Calafiroe + McKenna

<+> Ego tries to transform Earth into an ally in his fight against the Celestials; and Blink receives information casting doubts on the Timebrokers motivations. This lively and varied book continues to impress in Tony Bedard's hands, bringing us a healthy mix of familiar and lesser-used characters in alternate timelines. While this issue is more about action than character, Jim Calafiore's pencils help infuse personality into the scenes; his Ego-Earth is a particularly moving sight. Consistently good fun. (IM) 7

Fantastic Four 518

by Waid & Wieringo + Kesel

<=> The simplest ideas are often the best. It takes skill to make a complex idea look simple. And so go the clichés. But both apply to Mark Waid and his refreshing take on these at times maltreated characters. This issue, Sue Storm takes centre stage due to cornball alien, Zius. The creative team cheekily plays on the FF's tradition of the occasional guest-starring ET cornball, but this one will no doubt be booted aside by the arrival of a certain cosmic powerhouse. (CEB) 8

<+> Survivors of planets destroyed by Galactus have learned that Sue could undo their cloaking technology, so seek to negate that possiblity. Waid's script may have a couple of memorable comic moments, but I find his Fantastic Four plots tedious and disinteresting. Karl Kesel's inks emphasise the cartoon look of Mike Weiringo's pencils, a styling which is not to my taste, preferring hammy simplicity to detail and sophistication. This book's current popularity baffles me. (IM) 4

Iron Man 88

by Ricketts & Harris + Feister

<+> The duplicate Iron Man who's been wrecking Stark's life comes after Tony. Mark Ricketts' plot appears to have already flagged up its big twist ending, so not only is the script wooden but it seems there'll be no surprise finale. Tony Harris often blanks out backgrounds when pencilling, but Tom Feister does a good job on inks, emphasising the chaos of the fight; but modest artistic achievements don't make up for weak writing. (IM) 5

Kabuki 2

by Mack; Icon

<=> Kabuki's new friend helps her hide her scars in preparation for her new life. David Mack gives a lesson in characterisation in writing the new girl, and through her and Kabuki's interaction he also casts light on their mysterious friend Akemi. It's a masterful achievement for Mack to combine magnificent experimental patchwork artistic structure with detailed character exploration and a cohesive, flowing narrative. His work is a true marriage of words and art, beyond any other writer/artist I'm aware of. They are inseparable, symbiotic parts of the whole that lead and inform each other like infatuated dancers. Staggeringly good. (IM) 9

Madrox 1

by David & Raimondi + Henessy; Marvel Knights

When someone stabs one of Madrox's dupes, Jamie re-absorbs him to find out who's trying to kill him. Peter David's script is packed with memorable twists, funny clips, crazy speeches and freaky glimpses into until-then familiar characters' psychology; his use of the little-used Rahne 'Wolfsbane' Sinclair and Guido (Strong Guy) furthers the link to his seminal run on X-Factor. Pablo Raimondi's moody pencils help this book find its stylistic home as a weird, groovy detective book; this could be the start of something very very good. (IM) 8

Mystique 19

by McKeever & Garcia + Fernandez; Marvel Knights

<=> Shephard asks Mystique to help him recoup an artifact stolen by Hydra, while Shortpack requests her to be reassigned. Sean McKeever has smoothly taken over writing this book, adding to espionage plots layers of humour (Shortpack running an assault course made of Xavier's office stationary is wonderful). Manual Garcia's artwork develops the traditional western forms we are used to, adding flair and fluidity, but sadly nothing so boldly experimental at to scare the horses. It's satisfying as a stand-alone issue but most importantly confirms McKeever's suitability to the book. (IM) 6

New X-Men: Academy X 5

by DeFilippis + Weir & Ryan + Ketcham

<+++> When the FBI come to arrest Kevin over the death of his father, teachers and students are divided on how to respond. Nunzio DeFilippis and Christina Weir's plotting is improved, but we shouldn't need one character to observe that another's speech reminds them of the opponents of Nazi fascism – it's unnatural dialogue, it disrupts the flow of conversation – and should be obvious from the initial speech. Michael Ryan's pencils show progress; Julian's arrogance is now tempered with fey illustrations of his aggression, and while most interior scenes are severely inked, others show a welcome softening. (IM) 6

Nightcrawler 1

by Aguirre-Sacasa & Robertson + Faucher

When 14 children are horrifyingly slaughtered in a locked room, Nightcrawler, as a teleporter, is asked to investigate. Roberto Aguirre-Sacasa opens with a thus far unexceptional detective plot, but Darick Robertson, on pencils, gets off to a flying start, portraying Nightcrawler as a man of contradictions, a man both beautiful and monstrous, which suits this serious, occult-based story. Wayne Faucher's inks are somewhat heavy-handed, but are fortunately leavened by Avalon's Matt Milla and his overcast colours. A reasonable start. (IM) 6

Runaways 18

by Vaughan & Alphona + Yeung

<-> Now safe, the Runaways reunite and decide to rescue pet dinosaur Old Lace from a storage facility. Brian K Vaughan manages to wrap up his plots satisfactorily, without schmaltz,

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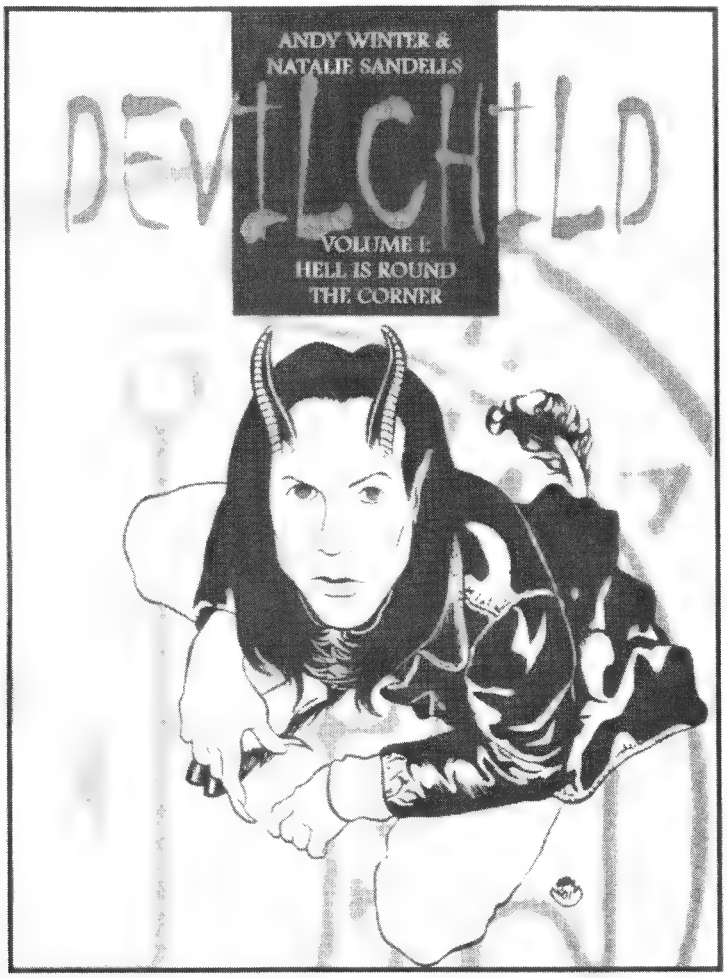

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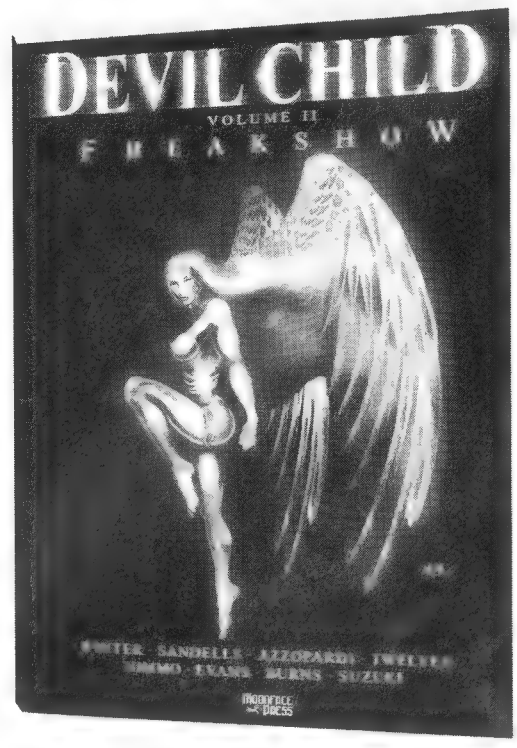

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whilst simultaneously keeping enough open to make a second series feel natural. The remaining team members now have a natural cohesion and connection, an affection that's rare in team books. Penciller Adrian Alphona struggles to share that enthusiasm, leaving faces looking flat, and the grim colours of UDON's Christina Strain make it hard for readers to embrace this book. (IM) 6

Thor 85

by Oeming + Berman & DiVito + Villari

<=> Thor strikes a curious and unexpected alliance with Surtur, forcing Those Who Sit In Shadow to intervene. Michael Avon Oeming and Daniel Berman's truly epic plot takes a couple of welcome turns before its shattering conclusion, which fittingly ends the title's run but leaves me dubious as to how it can be relaunched next year. Andrea DiVito's art spectacularly depicts brutal battles and destruction, including some nastly looking trolls, Surtur aside. Laura Villari's colours powerfully emphasise the cataclysmic situation, wrapping up a striking finale in shocking emerald. (IM) 8

Ultimate Elektra 1

by Carey & Larroca + Miki

I wasn't a fan of the Ultimate Daredevil & Elektra mini, but this is much better. In fact, this could be the best version of Elektra since the classic Frank Miller DDs and the subsequent miniseries with Bill Sienkiewicz. Like Brian Michael Bendis, Mike Carey has an instinctive grasp of characterisation and dialogue, and these elements are always the essential building blocks of good stories. Very promising indeed. (RN) 8

Ultimate Fantastic Four 11

by Ellis & Immonen + vonGrawbadger

<+> The team travels to Copenhagen to confront Victor van Damme. Warren Ellis's story is short on plot and heavy on action cliches, making the writing unexceptional beyond some enjoyable dialogue. Fortunately Stuart Immonen's art is lovely, fluid and charming – although his rendition of Doom doesn't look nasty or dangerous enough to please me. (IM) 6

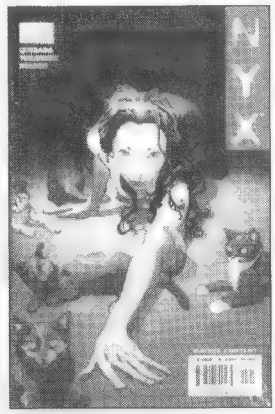
<=> Sadly there's nothing ultimate or fantastic about this book. After the genius displayed in books such as Stormwatch, the Authority and Planetary, Ellis seemed to have tired of superheroes. His subsequent return to capes and tights proves that his heart no longer belongs to that genre. The current storyline is mediocre, and doesn't do him any favours. It's not all Ellis's fault though, as this lacklustre version of the FF that he inherited from Bendis and Millar are pale shadows of their true selves. An Ultimate title too far? Quite possibly. (RN) 4

Ultimate Nightmare 2

by Ellis & Hairsine + Decastro + Coleby

<=> Slightly less spooky goings-on this issue, as we get more set-up. A bit slow-moving perhaps, this series remains compelling enough to keep me interested. There are some great character moments, with the Ultimate version of the Falcon being especially impressive. And the art is simply wonderful. (KG) 8

<-> Both The X-Men and The Ultimates independently head for Tunguska, chatting en route; and as far as Warren Ellis' plot goes, that's it. Decompression rules. Ellis scripts more interestingly than he plots, fortunately, and his Ultimate Falcon makes a cool scientist, an expert who's also physically fit. Trevor Hairsine's pencils are usually fine, and while they're okay here, the constant stream of talking heads means he never really gets a chance to cut loose – just like the characters. (IM) 4



NYX #5

by Quesada & Teranish + Nelson + Soto

<+> Kiden and Cameron help X-23 to safety, then chase a girl whose animal-based powers uncontrollably flare up. Robert Teranish and Nelson with Soto do a good job of imitating departed artist Josh Middleton's style, and imbue the scenes of Kiden's dead father with ghastly creepiness that is never OTT. Sotocolor's F. Serrano uses pastel colours to underline the fragility of the situation and they immensely emphasise the distasteful nature of the new girl's transformation scene. Delays and creative changes haven't helped this book, but it's still worth reading. (IM) 7

<-> After the rather public departure of Josh Middleton from the title and his contract with Marvel, it's hardly surprising that the artwork suffers in the latest issue. Robert Teranishi does a decent enough job, aided by Sotocolor's F. Serrano, but this is not the usual high standard. Joe Quesada's script similarly suffers from rather stilted dialogue, as another teenage mutant is rather publicly revealed and hunted down. (MAT) 7

Uncanny X-Men 449

by Claremont & Coipel

<=> The X-Men battle Viper in the Murderworld, where – it goes without saying – nothing is ever quite what it seems. Olivier Coipel has the unenviable task of standing in for Alan Davis but does a more-than-respectable job, while Chris Claremont brings what only he can: good old-fashioned mutant daring-do that rarely stops for breath. Enjoyable. (CEB) 7

<=> Viper fights the X-Men in Arcade's Murderworld. The somewhat complicated plot – especially their hostage rescue – requires several readings to make sense of, lacking sufficient exposition (an unusual criticism to make of Claremont) but has a rattle-along, enjoyable pace and fell. Penciller Coipel struggles to find fluidity in the few fight scenes, and to give the characters humanity; with Scott Hanna, their work is competent and unfeeling. Overall – rather ordinary. (IM) 5

Uncanny X-Men 450

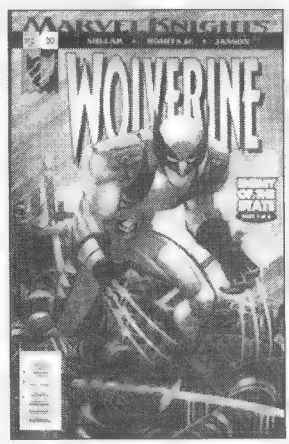
by Claremont & Davis + Farmer

<++> Wolverine and crew track down X-23, who is killing people with adamantium claws similar to his. Chris Claremont intersperses action sequences with soapy character moments which feel artificial rather than character-led (such as Nightcrawler and Rachel kissing, when Kurt is already mooning over Storm); but such sub-plots aside this is a well-crafted and easily read issue, in which Alan Davis and Mark Farmer sometimes find great form, offering more subtlety and grace than in recent issues. Where Frank D'armata's colours are more subdued, the art has a wonderfully gloomy quality. It's a curious non-event for a Marvel anniversary issue, but that's no bad thing. (IM) 6

X-Men 161

by Austen & Larroca + Miki

<++> The Brotherhood of (evil) Mutants attacks Philadelphia, and fights the X-Men. Some of the fight scenes are hard to make sense of, courtesy of Chuck Austen's awkward writing (Rogue absorbs Polaris' powers without Lorna suffering; Wolverine doesn't even react when stabbed right through; the near-invulnerable Exodus is taken down by one Havok blast). Salvadore Larroca'a artwork is much improved, at last showing brief flashes of the talent that lit up early issues of X-Treme X-Men. The final page shot of Juggernaut is appropriately impressive, and while many faces look flat and frozen Larroca's semi-transparent Iceman looks fine. (IM) 5



Wolverine 20

by Millar & Romita Jr + Janson; Marvel Knights

<+> Wolverine is brainwashed by The Hand, and sets out to murder the Marvel Universe. This isn't an impressive or flashy start from the new creative team, but that said, it's solid and entertaining stuff. The story is conventional but well-written, and the art is superb. Worth a look. (KG) 7

<+> The addition of Mark Millar and John Romita Jr to any title offers the promise of quality, and so it is in the case of the Wolverine monthly. Taking Logan back to Japan and adding a supporting cast of familiar faces ranging from Nick Fury to Elektra ensures that Millar has plenty of toys to play with. Although Romita Jr isn't quite as comfortable drawing Wolverine as he was with Daredevil and Spider-Man, he's nevertheless an astonishingly consistent artist with a unique style perfectly suited to superhero books. (RN) 7

<-> There's a definite change in tone for the 'Knights title, as rather than moody crime dramas, Millar heralds a return to costumed superheroics. Logan travels to Japan in search of a missing child, but finds himself in much deeper water and brainwashed by Hydra. Surprisingly for a Millar script, we've all seen this a hundred times before. Even Romita Jr's artwork fails to impress, his more lithe style seemingly unsuited to the stocky character's adventures. (MAT) 6

US Indies

Animation Magazine 139

by Grove + Zahed & various; Animation Magazine; $5.95

<=> A comic-rich issue of this glossy, full-colour monthly. There's a special report on superhero movies; Jeff Matsuda talks about his eagerly-awaited new Warner Bros cartoon series, The Batman; and the magazine's topped off nicely with A Day in the Life of Stan Lee. (CEB) 7

Blacksad Book 2: Arctic Nation

by Canales & Guarnido; ibooks; $12.95

John Blacksad (a black panther who's a private detective in a world where all humans look like the animals whom their personalities anthropomorphicly represent) investigates the kidnap of a local girl. Juan Diaz Canales' tale of corruption and extreme race hatred is enjoyably cynical and bleak, despite the bruised romantic at Blacksad's heart. Juanjo Gaurnido's delectable, warm artwork is as memorable here as in the first Blacksad graphic novel and elevates this book to greatness. (IM) 8

Dead @ 17: Blood of Saints 3

by Howard; Viper Comics

<+> Nara sees her life as horror-filled and earth-shattering. Nothing new for a teenager there then. Except she really has cause to, because of evil demon Bolabogg. While Josh Howard's dialogue can be overly cryptic (Winston and Noel's conversation almost sounds like two amateur Yodas going at it), his artwork is superb, making this feel as much a cartoon as a comic. (CEB) 7

Demo 10

by Wood & Cloonan; AIT/Planet Lar

<-> Thomas meets a girl who claims to have a "gift" that gives her a perfect knowledge of his life. I can't quite make sense of this issue, of what the writer is trying to communicate or how it fits in with the concept of the series; worse, I also felt disconnected from the characters, who are minimally described. Brian Wood's final pages of script feel trite, in sharp contrast with the personalities already depicted. Becky Cloonan's art feels off: the main girl's age is indeterminable and Thomas looks like a shop-front mannequin. I could be missing something. I've enjoyed this series until now, but this issue doesn't make much sense to me. (IM) 5

Fade From Grace 2

by Benson & Amano; Beckett Books

<+> I wondered if my review of issue #1 was exaggerated, but on reading #2 it's impossible to adequately describe how much I love this book. John picks Fade as his heroic pseudonym and stops bullies and robbers. Jeff Amano's art is indescribably beautiful and tender, reminiscent of Oeming's Powers; but Gabriel Benson is an equally talented partner, mixing drama, suspense and gentle humour, and writing this

book from girlfriend Grace's perspective gives it an air of trepidation. If you think you're tired of superheroes, don't dismiss them before reading this magnificent work. Simply superb. (IM) 9

Gloom Cookie 21

by Valentino & Sparks; Slave Labor Graphics

<+> A great issue of *Gloom Cookie*, with a glorious cover. In a comical incident at coffee, Sarah and Lyndi bump into San Francisco's barmy vampire goth scene. Some quality explanatory dialogue follows, of exactly the right kind and in just the right place for readers whose heads may be spinning by now. The Carnival Macabre prepares for war, and we're introduced to the freaks of the New Orleans Carnival. (DK) 7

Gold Digger Swimsuit 8

by Watts & + various; Antarctic Press; $4.50

<=> A light-hearted summer special in which aspiring creators and fans get a shot at the limelight by seeing their Gold Digger-based pinups and short stories published. The standouts of this instalment are artists Mike May, Sanny-Folkesson, Tim Ely, Marcus Shanks and Jason Fletcher. (CEB) 7

It Disappears

by Nate Powell; Soft Skull Press

Stunning, truly stunning. Frank Miller loves Powell ("A nice punchy use of black, good comics") and here you can see why. Following his acclaimed **Tiny Giants**, this young find consolidates his position as one of the greats in this small format 78 page graphic novel about a boy's journey of discovery. If you love Toth, Risso or Miller, this is for you. Your store can get it from Turnaround in the UK, insist they do so. (TM) 9

Manwha Mania: How To Draw Korean Comics

by Hart & various; Watson-Guptill Publications; $19.95

It's no secret that I'm a manga fan. But what even I didn't realise was that such stories as Priest and Ragnarock are in fact "manhwa", meaning Korean comics. Yet renowned instruction author, Christopher Hart, teaches us far more than just that as he spotlights the intricacies in drawing for this latest craze. The beauty of books such as this is, whatever type of comic artist you're aiming to be, it will enhance your skills regardless. (CEB) 8

More Fund Comics

by various; Sky-Dog; $10

A host of well-known and obscure comic book creators donate strips for the benefit of the Comic Book Legal Defense Fund. Mini-adventures for *Savage Dragon*, *Patrick The Wolf Boy* and *Usagi Yojimbo* are found alongside more acquired tastes prospecting for readers for fledgling indie titles. There are gems too, like *Alienz*, *Amelia Rules!* and *Squeeze Me*. For a volume numbering 192 pages, it's cheap at only ten dollars. (DK) 7

Nightmares & Fairy Tales

by Valentino & FSc; Slave Labour Graphics

When two teenage girls fall in love, their families forcibly separate them, leading into a re-working of Beauty & The Beast which has more charm and believability than any version I've stumbled into. Serena Valentino deftly re-imagines these old myths and tales, but the historical setting does leave dialogue feeling unhelpfully stilted; still only a minor concern. FSc's black and white art suits this stripped-back book, and the Beast is more repulsive and scary for the lack of colour. This is my first issue of the book, but it definitely won't be my last. (IM) 7

Hero Happy Hour Super Special

by various; GeekPunk

Sixteen short stories set in the bar where superheroes hang out after hours. This hilarious black and white book never gets the attention it's more serious and sentimental Top Cow counterpart Common Grounds enjoyed, despite regularly being the superior product. Highlights here include Steve Niles & Ben Templesmith's Dracula, Frankenstein & Werewolf 'team-up'; James Patrick's Aware-of-his-medium-Man, who refuses to be rlled by an argumentative fellow drinker because he knows they're a plot device; John Schuler's scratchy pencils of Run Master P, furious at his portrayal in a TV ad ; Todd Nauck's pretty, layered art depicting Pop Idol-style reality TV superhero auditions; and Hero Happy Hour: the role-playing game, where nothing happens. 16 tales means a wealth of material and creators. Funny, clever and engrossing, there's something for everyone. (IM) 8

Rabbithead

by Dart; Alternative Comics; $4.95

Along with Shrimpy and Paul and Friends, this has to be the most bizarre comic that I've ever read. I defy even the most hardened alternative fan to provide a definitive explanation of its subject matter. Yet, I feel that is creator Rebecca Dart's express intention: not to create simply a comic, but a piece of art, and like all good art, it can be left open to interpretation. If that's the case, *RabbitHead* succeeds. (CEB) 7

Salmon Doubts

by Sacks; Alternative Comics; $14.95

Geoff and Henry are fish. Geoff's broadminded, Henry isn't. All Henry wants to do is swim upstream, spawn and die, while Geoff wants to see more of the world. With clever pacing, sharp timing, and charismatic art, this certainly establishes writer-artist Adam Sacks as an all-round thinking man's entertainer. A story as individual as Geoff himself. (CEB) 8

True Brit: A Celebration of the Great Comic Book Artists of the UK

edited by George Khoury; TwoMorrows $21.95/Quality £15.95

This is a book that focuses on those who have helped revolutionise comics ... British artists. Frank Quitely, Leo Baxendale, Dave Gibbons, Alan Davis, Bryan Hitch, Frank Hampson, Don Lawrence, Dave McKean, Frank Bellamy; these are just some of the panel pioneers that are placed under the microscope. Very nicely designed, with lots of artwork and in depth interviews, this makes for hours of absorbing reading. (CEB) 8

Twilight X: Storm 8

by Wight; Antarctic Press

<=> This really is a very intriguing comic. Creator Joseph Wight gives it a true-to-life feel with his realistic depictions of military hardware, and measured, calm handling of the characters. Then he goes and drops in a big dollop of sci-fi in the form of a moongun, and more shockingly, makes it seem entirely appropriate. A worthwhile read. (CEB) 7

The Watch: Casus Belli 2

by Read & McKenny; Phosphorescent Comics; $3.25

<=> It's rare to find a fresh new superhero comic in this day and age, but The Watch is just that. A lot of the credit goes to cartoony art team Stewart McKenny and Annette Kwok, who surprisingly succeed in manipulating a lot of the grit and maturity prevalent in this title. Writer Christian Read proves his worth too, by intelligently layering in lots of intrigue and action. (CEB) 7

You Can! Color Anime Style – Volume 2

by Guru-eFX; Antarctic Press; $5.95

When it comes to teaching how to colour, who better to instruct than Guru-eFX? All you require is a Mac or PC and Photoshop (3.0 or higher) and then, following the clear, concise instructions, away you go. Lighting, soft-edged rendering, and digital painting; all are covered, with some handy tips and hints added. An attractive must-read manual. (CEB) 7

Queen & Country 27

by Rucka & Norton; Oni Press

<+> Tara is interrupted and beaten searching McMillan's hotel room, but escapes with a disc of oil field yield data. Greg Rucka's plot moves at a gripping pace, and he powerfully scripts Tara's anger at not being backed up properly by Tom. Mike Norton's black and white art adds to the intensity and suspense but sometimes lacks in subtlety; but when that's my only criticism, you know this is good! (IM) 8

<=> Tara takes a beating and promptly does the window-jumping-through trick when her new partner fails to do his job properly. Cue one pissed off Tara when she's left to pick up the pieces. Rucka demonstrates an admirable understanding of British traits and idiosyncrasies – something often lacking when our colonial cousins decide to use Britain as a setting for their stories. Queen & Country owes a lot to old TV shows such as The Sandbaggers, Callan and even the Professionals (though Rucka might not acknowledge the latter comparison). (RN) 7

You Can! Draw Manga (Masters Edition) 4

by Dunn + Wight + Perry; Antarctic Press

Each month, a group of big-name manga artists team up to show and tell the techniques behind their trade. This time it's Ben Dunn, Fred Perry and Joseph Wight. While between them they cover perspective and background, often their little asides provide equal insight into their storytelling craft. (CEB) 7

Canadian Indies

Palookaville 17

by Seth; Drawn & Quarterly

<=> After an unexpectedly long wait, Seth releases a new issue of his ongoing Clyde Fans saga. The dreadfully introverted Simon Clyde daydreams, obsesses over his postcard collection, talks to his toy collection and cares for his geriatric mother. Though little appears to happen, Seth's apparently simple linework skilfully conveys the brooding sense of claustrophobia and stifling unease in his character. (MAT) 8

UK Indies

Assassin School 1

by Littler & Corts; AP Comics

Captain Hazard visits a US government funded school for assassins where the students are sexy girl orphans. He needs Emma for a mission, but she'll have to make up her missed homework. Lively storytelling and Corts's cute art make it an enjoyable read. Seeing how Emma goes about carrying out the hit is huge fun. (DK) 7

Brodie's Law 2

by Grant + Osiyemi & Bircham; Pulp Theatre Entertainment

<=> On the surface, this appears to be an intense street level action adventure with a twist of sci-fi, but it's all set against an ominous, brutal atmosphere that's just waiting to be unleashed. How long can the maestro of moodiness Alan Grant, and the eerie art team of David Bircham and James Yuen, keep it bottled up? Brodie's Law is a boost for the British comics scene. (CEB) 7

Judge Dredd The Megazine 224

by various; Rebellion

<+> Several stories have unexpected twists this issue. The Simping Detective meets a dancer in an incredible thong in *Innocence: A Broad*. Judge Dredd cracks down on the *Bite Fight*, goes out on *Meat Patrol*, and is Shimura's guest in *Executioner*. Pat Mills and Joe Colquhoun ramp up the horror in the reprinted *Charley's War*. The Meg gets another makeover: now perfect bound with thinner paper and a sci-fi reviews section. (DK) 8

Monster Club 1

by Emms & Bain; AP Comics

Following a 12-part limited series, volume

two of Monster Club continues with an unfunded team of youthful monster hunters cornering their quarry in a book store. This British independent comic seems targeted at an international market with its American setting and dialogue, baggy street fashion, and Theo Bain's Eastern-influenced art style. Despite obvious parallels, it avoids being a Buffy or Ghostbusters clone by striking an attitude of its own. (DK) 6

Monster Club 2

by Emms & Sutherns; AP Comics

<=> That the story can endure a sudden and dramatic change of artist is a testament to the strength of Richard Emms's plot. The new art style bears comparison to that of 2000AD's *Bec & Kawl* artist, Steve Roberts, but could do with reigning in a bit. The Monster Club agents track a carnivorous demon masquerading as a priest. The scripting wavers between pithy and arbitrary, but isn't bad overall. (DK) 6

2000 AD Progs 1407-1410

by various; Rebellion

<=> 2000 AD maintains quality almost across the board. Judge Dredd can only stand and watch as pro-democracy terrorists start nuking the city in *Total War*. John Wagner and Carlos Ezquerra tackle a story of monumental significance for *Strontium Dog. Caballistics Inc.* ends on a gruesome cliffhanger; and quirky inventiveness carries the day in *Robo-Hunter. Asylum II* entertains and has a loyal following, and Boo Cook's art is something to savour. (DK) 8

UK Titles

Chris Ware

by Raeburn;
Laurence King Publishing; £14.95

Chris Ware is a latter day sequential master and the first person ever to receive the Guardian First Book Award for a graphic novel. This eye-catching book is an overdue acknowledgment. Besides Ware's art (possibly the only way to describe his stories), the most striking thing that this book brings to light is his influence on contemporaries. A work no Ware fan can do without. (CEB) 8

Manga: Sixty Years of Japanese Comics

by Gravett;
Laurence King Publishing; £19.95

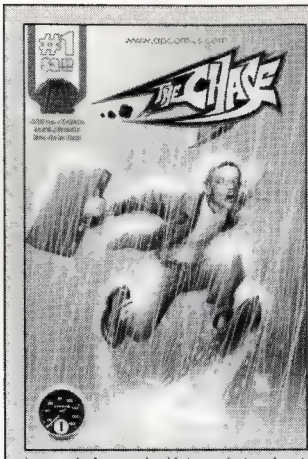
Manga makes up 40% of all published material in Japan annually, and it's now a phenomenon in Western comics. Author Paul Gravett tells us the who, what, why and whens of this fascinating genre. Assisted by rich graphics and interesting facts, he covers Astro Boy and Gon to Chobits and Captain Harlock. The only weakness is what isn't included, such as Antarctic Press, which has been a major player in Western manga for twenty years. That aside, this engaging read is a bound-to-be bestseller. (CEB) 7

UK Newsstand

Astonishing Spider-Man 118

by various; Panini UK

<=> Aunt May and Peter talk through her discovery of his double life. Stracynski does an excellent job, making up for the fact that May was even resurrected in the first place. But what's going on with the art? Both characters have disproportionately large heads! Maybe it's the additional angst... (KM) 8



The Chase 1

by Miranda + Miranda & de la Cruz; AP Comics

Fellow City, Chicago's metropolitan neighbour, is rife with organised crime controlled by ethnically constituted syndicates. Artists Inaki Miranda and Eva de la Cruz of *Metro Judge Dredd* fame, together with co-writer Adriano Miranda, set up an intriguing mystery/thriller. A Chinese crook starts the chase, leaving taxi driver Tom Lecab holding a highly valuable item. Likeable characters and winning details of plot and art should win some loyal readers. (DK) 6

Not the short lived and sadly missed title from DC, but a neat little British-published comic that mixes familiar gangster and thriller themes into a pleasing genre piece involving our atypical heroes being sucked into mobster shoot outs when a suit case falls into the hands of the main protagonist by mistake. There's lots of emotive rain and good dialogue and the art has a stylish smooth feel to it – half manga cartoon and half *To Live and Die in LA*. (RN) 7

A big city, gangs, a private investigator and a taxi driver. Sounds like a familiar set up, yet this comic presents a fresh and original take on a well-worn scenario. The artwork is consistent and strong with a cinematic feel which complements the pacing of the story. Written in an engaging way, with a good cliffhanger ending, this is a very enjoyable read. (LO) 8

The Avengers United 45

by Busiek + Garcia & Layton/ Thomas + Buckler & Sinnot; Panini UK

<-> Despite a double helping of episodes, the main story feels rather leaden this issue, not helped by Garcia being an able but not adequate replacement for Alan Davis. Points also deducted for an ugly painted cover, which makes Scarlet Witch and Ms Marvel look like Russian weightlifters. (KM) 6

Batman: Legends 13

by various; Panini UK

<+> Azzarello and Risso's *Broken City* immediately attracts with its opening episode, a relief compared to the narratively heavy-handed Hush. Dave Johnson's striking cover conveys the change of direction within. Reprints of Batman #589 *(Close Before Striking)* and #243 *(The Lazarus Pit)* round off an excellent issue. (KM) 7

Doctor Who Magazine 349

by Gray + Geraghty & Roach; Panini UK

<=> An undoubted highlight, the revamped Cybermen dominate this story, looking suitably 'futuristic' and darned scary! The atmospheric art is further enhanced by spectacular colouring from Adrian Salmon. Ending with a great cliffhanger, this is sure proof that the comic strip has storylines to rival the most memorable of the TV episodes. (KM) 7

Essential X-Men 118

by Morrison + various; Panini UK

<-> Although Morrison's plot developments continue to impress, he slightly fumbles the ball with his handling of the Shi'ar Imperial Guard. However, more annoying is the artistic effort from Igor Kordey. Subtleties are either lost or rendered meaningless... and Wolverine even resembles The Pogues' Shane McGowan at one point! Without Kordey's art an 8. (KM) With Kordey's art... 5

The Mighty World of Marvel (Vol 3) 22

by various; Panini UK

<=> In the DD strip, Foggy Nelson goes undercover in Guts, amusingly told from the character's perspective. Steranko's SHIELD reprints from Strange Tales #163-164 are another highlight, whilst the Hulk vs Iron Man clash benefits from John Severin's addition as embellisher. David A Roach and Dylan Teague work wonders with Trimpe's front cover art. (KM) 7

Toxic 25

by Taylor + Stringer & various; Egmont Magazines

<+> A special edition Spider-Man issue, in which the guys at Toxic tell – and show – us the latest web-head toys, video games, books, and of course, movie. Even the regular comic strips are more frenetic than normal, especially Jaspre Bark and Mark Daniels' *Time Toilet*, which really puts the "toilet" in toilet humour. But I couldn't find Man-Ant! (CEB) 8

Ultimate Spider-Man 34

by Bendis + various; Panini UK

<-> Literally an issue of two halves: the enjoyable Ultimate Six concludes; the regular US series picks up from #47. Unfortunately, this direct comparison emphasises how tired the latter has become, particularly visually (yes, Bagley's back). Both Bagley and Bendis must take responsibility for an appalling take on the Kingpin. Disappointing. (KM) 6

Ultimate X-Men 20

by Bendis + Finch & Thibert; Panini UK

<-> Bendis's story, featuring Spider-Man, Daredevil and Wolverine, feels like an excellently rendered though unpublished storyline from the unlamented Ultimate Marvel Team-Up. Finch produces dramatic, exciting art, but has an annoying tendency to recycle panels. Not bad overall but no match for Millar and perhaps more suited to its companion UK title. (KM) 7

Warhammer Monthly 84

by Irving + Haward + Erskine; Black Library

<=> If, like me, you think that the crafty rat-men – The Skaven – are the most fascinating race in the Warhammer canon, you're in for a real treat this issue, as they appear in not one, but two stories. Even better, we get to see artist Frazer Irving's take on them. Almighty mayhem in the trademark manner of Black Library. (CEB) 7

Wolverine & Deadpool 104

by various; Panini UK

<+> The new-look title kicks off with a team-up from Wolverine Annual '99, a typically contrived tale with bland art. The original Alpha Flight turn up in the lead strip to (thankfully) dispose of Mauvais. Best of the bunch is Deadpool's first miniseries from 1993, courtesy of Nicieza, Madureira and Farmer. (KM) 6

Small Press

FutureQuake 2

by various; £3.30 from G. Wyatt
29a Green Street, Great Gonerby
Grantham, Lincs NG31 8LE

Almost essential for Paul Glasswell and Adrian Bamforth's infamous satire *Sperm Count* alone! An array of promising talent has produced a second collection of stories in a *Future Shocks* style. *The Hunter*, by Arthur Wyatt and Mike Molcher has a delicious sting in the tail. Matt Timson's impressive artwork adorns Gary Wilkinson's script on *The Dig*. Daniel Whiston and Adrian Bamforth introduce readers to an unusual game of Russian roulette. (DK) 7

Graphic Eye 3

edited by Nik; £2.95 from Smallzone
10 Cleveland Avenue, Hugh Ercall
Telford, Shropshire TF6 6AH

A Gene Colan interview is the main feature here, followed by brief retrospectives on the Shadow, Curt Swan, Dr Strange, Timely Comics and FOOM magazine, amongst others. Including early published fan art from the likes of Steve Rude, Brian Bolland and Paul Neary's stunning cover for Dez Skinn's old fanzine, Fantasy Advertiser, this copiously illustrated 34-page quality title is a delightful mix of nostalgia and comics curios. (JE) 8

Monstrum Horrendum 2

by O'Moore; There Goes Tokyo;
£1.50 from L.O'Moore
145 Clydesdale Road
Byker, NE6 2EQ

I've heard a lot of good things about small press outfit There Goes Tokyo, but have never actually read any of their work ... until now. I'm pleased to say that I'm impressed. Leonie O'Moore's eerie-yet-endearing tale of crazy creatures meeting the everyday world is well-crafted with lots of consideration given to pacing and presentation. (CEB) 7

Tales of the Wonder Kind #1

by Ochiltree;
£2.95 from Krypton Komics
252 High Road, Tottenham
London N15 4AJ

Having run a successful retail outlet for 15 years, owner Gary Ochiltree indulges himself by creating his own comicbook. Aided by his pals, Warhammer's Lee Townsend and Graphic Eye's Nick Neocleous on inks, and *Borderline*'s Martin Shipp as co-author, Ochiltree's end product is a flashback to simpler times. Evocative of the Texas Trio's Star Spangled Comics, this slicky-produced 36-pager is unashamed traditional superhero fare. Despite Ochiltree's weakness in facial expression – most characters having a slack-jawed gaping expression – it offers great value, packing in more story across its three strips than an average Marvel or DC miniseries. A competent first try with truly superb calligraphy. (TM) 7

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Comics Economics

Top 100 US comicbook sales for June 2004

Identity Crisis in at #1

Rank	Prior	Title, Issue, Price & Estimated Orders	Publisher
1	(N)	**Identity Crisis #1** $3.95 (163,111)	DC Comics
2	(=)	**Superman #206** $2.50 (162,095)	DC Comics
3	(1)	**Astonishing X-Men #2** $2.99 (133,784)	Marvel
4	(11)	**Ultimate Spider-Man #60** $2.25 (104,789)	Marvel
5	(4)	**Ultimate Spider-Man #61** $2.25 (101,159)	Marvel
6	(5)	**Ultimate Fantastic Four #6** $2.25 (100,972)	Marvel
7	(6)	**Ultimate Fantastic Four #7** $2.25 (99,445)	Marvel
8	(5)	**Uncanny X-Men #445** $2.25 (98,660)	Marvel
9	(6)	**X-Men #158** $2.25 (96,759)	Marvel
10	(7)	**Ultimate Fantastic Four #8** $2.25 (96,694)	Marvel

Superman at #2

11	(9)	**Ultimate X-Men #47** $2.25 (95,254)	Marvel
12	(11)	**Ultimate X-Men #48** $2.25 (94,238)	Marvel
13	(16)	**Amazing Spider-Man #509** $2.25 (88,289)	Marvel
14	(9)	**Wolverine: The End #4** $2.99 (83,947)	Marvel
15	(7)	**Marvel Knights Spider-Man #3** $2.99 (82,715)	Marvel
16	(12)	**Amazing Spider-Man #508** $2.25 (82,268)	Marvel
17	(18)	**JLA #100** $3.50 (75,434)	DC Comics
18	(13)	**Batman #629** $2.25 (72,020)	DC Comics
19	(19)	**Wolverine #16** $2.25 (67,519)	Marvel
20	(20)	**Teen Titans #12** $2.50 (66,424)	DC Comics
21	(N)	**Amazing Fantasy #1** $2.99 (60,468)	Marvel
■ International direct market retail orders estimated below 60,000			
22	(16)	**Excalibur #2** $2.99 (59,791)	Marvel
23	(14)	**New X-Men #2** $2.99 (58,855)	Marvel
24	(23)	**Avengers #84** $2.25 (57,083)	Marvel
25	(24)	**Daredevil #61** $2.99 (53,770)	Marvel
26	(27)	**Conan #5** $2.99 (51,307)	Dark Horse
27	(25)	**Spectacular Spider-Man #15** $2.25 (50,997)	Marvel
28	(27)	**Spectacular Spider-Man #16** $2.25 (50,515)	Marvel
■ International direct market retail orders estimated below 50,000			
29	(26)	**Fantastic Four #514** $2.25 (49,895)	Marvel
30	(31)	**Punisher #7** $2.99 (48,124)	Marvel
31	(30)	**Punisher #8** $2.99 (47,476)	Marvel
32	(29)	**Action Comics #816** $2.50 (47,065)	DC Comics
33	(N)	**Astonishing X-Men #1** $3.99 (46,719)	Marvel
34	(37)	**Flash #211** $2.25 (45,740)	DC Comics
35	(N)	**Identity Disc #1** $2.99 (44,696)	Marvel
36	(28)	**Adventures of Superman #629** $2.50 (44,487)	DC Comics
37	(36)	**Incredible Hulk #73** $2.25 (44,249)	Marvel
38	(39)	**Marvel Knights 4 #6** $2.99 (44,076)	Marvel
39	(33)	**Wolverine/Punisher #4** $2.99 (44,019)	Marvel
40	(40)	**Outsiders #13** $2.50 (43,313)	DC Comics
41	(41)	**JSA #62** $2.50 (42,665)	DC Comics
42	(46)	**Wanted #4** $2.99 (42,204)	Image
43	(30)	**Robin #127** $2.25 (40,749)	DC Comics
44	(43)	**JLA: Another Nail #2** $5.95 (40,504)	DC Comics
■ International direct market retail orders estimated below 40,000			
45	(N)	**Powerless #1** $2.99 (39,798)	Marvel
46	(N)	**Doom Patrol #1** $2.50 (39,309)	DC Comics
47	(46)	**Avengers/Thunderbolts #4** $2.99 (38,293)	Marvel
48	(46)	**Exiles #48** $2.99 (38,120)	Marvel
49	(43)	**Transformers: Generation One Vol 3 #5** $2.95 (37,710)	DreamWave
50	(45)	**X-Men Unlimited #3** $2.99 (36,737)	Marvel
51	(47)	**Captain America #27** $2.99 (36,212)	Marvel
52	(48)	**Batman: Gotham Knights #54** $2.95 (35,988)	DC Comics
53	(35)	**District X #2** $2.99 (35,844)	Marvel
54	(51)	**Captain America #28** $2.99 (35,664)	Marvel
55	(47)	**Avengers/Thunderbolts #5** $2.99 (35,563)	Marvel
56	(34)	**Firestorm #2** $2.50 (35,398)	DC Comics
57	(54)	**Spawn #135** $2.50 (35,203)	Image
58	(50)	**Cable/Deadpool #4** $2.99 (34,966)	Marvel
59	(51)	**Superman: Birthright #11** $2.95 (34,829)	DC Comics
60	(52)	**Detective Comics #795** $2.95 (34,649)	DC Comics
61	(N)	**Superman Secret Files 2004** $4.95 (34,390)	DC Comics
62	(56)	**Green Lantern #178** $2.25 (33,662)	DC Comics
63	(54)	**Green Arrow #39** $2.50 (33,324)	DC Comics
64	(62)	**Thor #80** $2.99 (32,567)	Marvel
65	(64)	**Thor #81** $2.99 (32,517)	Marvel
66	(N)	**Scratch #1** $2.50 (32,236)	DC Comics
67	(61)	**Birds of Prey #68** $2.50 (32,034)	DC Comics
68	(N)	**Handbook of Marvel Universe: Spider-Man 2004** $3.99 (32,013)	Marvel
69	(55)	**Captain America & The Falcon #4** $2.99 (30,688)	Marvel
70	(60)	**Emma Frost #12** $2.99 (30,392)	Marvel
71	(69)	**GI Joe #31** $2.95 (30,385)	Devils Due
72	(84)	**Batgirl #53** $2.50 (30,371)	DC Comics
73	(61)	**Nightwing #94** $2.25 (30,155)	DC Comics
74	(N)	**Spider-Man/Dr Octopus: Year One #1** $2.99 (30,133)	Marvel
■ International direct market retail orders estimated below 30,000			
75	(74)	**Iron Man #84** $2.99 (29,629)	Marvel
76	(75)	**Iron Man #85** $2.99 (29,615)	Marvel
77	(N)	**Mary Jane #1** $2.25 (29,471)	Marvel
78	(57)	**Alpha Flight #4** $2.99 (29,384)	Marvel
79	(63)	**Wonder Woman #205** $2.25 (29,233)	DC Comics
80	(N)	**Witches #1** $2.99 (29,024)	Marvel
81	(N)	**Ex Machina #1** $2.95 (28,549)	DC Comics
82	(70)	**Mystique #16** $2.99 (28,189)	Marvel
83	(71)	**Thanos #11** $2.99 (27,663)	Marvel
84	(66)	**She-Hulk #4** $2.99 (27,648)	Marvel
85	(89)	**Street Fighter #8** $2.95 (27,432)	Devils Due
86	(68)	**Hawkman #29** $2.50 (27,296)	DC Comics
87	(74)	**Spider-Man/Dr Octopus: Year One #2** $2.99 (27,137)	Marvel
88	(N)	**Fathom: Dawn of War #0** $2.50 (26,907)	ASP
89	(82)	**Y: The Last Man #23** $2.95 (26,662)	DC Comics
90	(79)	**Weapon X #25** $2.99 (26,475)	Marvel
91	(80)	**Venom #16** $2.99 (26,302)	Marvel
92	(80)	**Witches #2** $2.99 (25,934)	Marvel
93	(85)	**Fables #26** $2.50 (25,553)	DC Comics
94	(N)	**Spider-Man 2 Movie Adaptation** $3.50 (25,437)	Marvel
95	(81)	**GI Joe: Reloaded #4** $2.95 (25,157)	Devils Due
96	(N)	**World's Best DC Archives Sampler** $0.99 (25,106)	DComics
97	(N)	**Challengers of the Unknown #1** $2.95 (25,027)	DC Comics
98	(93)	**Batman: Death & Maidens #9** $2.95 (24,948)	DC Comics
99	(87)	**Aquaman #19** $2.50 (24,919)	DC Comics
100	(78)	**GI Joe: Master & Apprentice #2** $2.95 (24,768)	Devils Due

With thanks to Milton Griepp and ICv2.com

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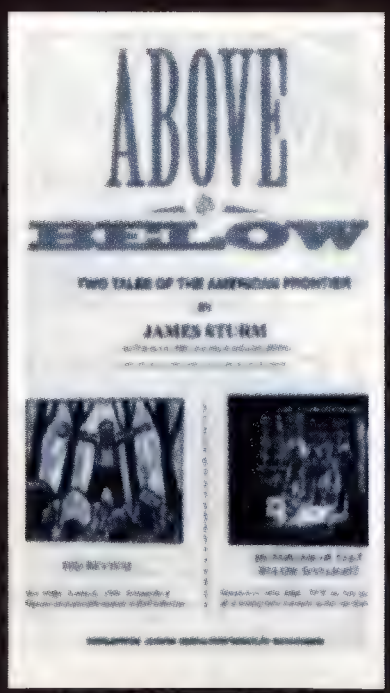

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Q&A

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Baffle us with comics questions, or save us with answers!

War Picture Library

Ed Illya
14 Ropery Street, Bow
London E3 4QF

RE: FLEETWAY's **War Picture Library** – Every sculeboy knows Hugo Pratt did some of this type of thing, but did you know US war comics veteran John Severin did too? The one I found was No. 222, *Crack-Up!*

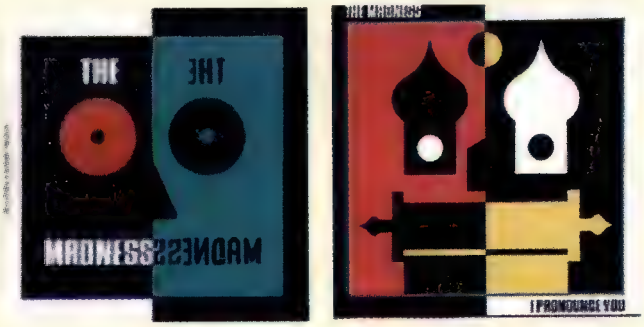
Not particularly happy-looking Severin, but unmistakeable, and a class act. Does anybody out there know of any more?

Also (and this may have been a **Commando** title. I'm not sure of the difference), there's one story I remember gripped me as a teen that I'd like to read again, if I could only identify the title or issue number.

Does the following hazy description ring anybody's bells? WWII, Italy, set around a resort hotel, a lone GI (maybe Tommy): less sure, but sniper action around open-air swimming pool, and possibly a tank. It could be called *The Hotel*. Longshot I know, but Who Dares Wins and all that, wot?

Answer Updates

Readers provide answers for previous issues' questions



Dave Gibbons on sleeve art for The Madness

THE Nutty Boys phoned me up, impressed by the symbols I'd used in (yes) **Watchmen**. They had the idea of using a symbol to represent each track on their forthcoming album.

I met up with them and came up with a number of designs that we boiled down and presented to Virgin; they advised me to bring a big bag to the meeting, which they then helped me to fill with huge quantities of tapes from the Virgin stockroom!

In those pre-computer days, I needed some typographic help and could think of no-one more suited to the task than Rian Hughes. We knocked the thing into shape and Rian came up with the "Veidt Method" reference. It may have been just to fit a line but if there is some other meaning, he'd know.

I drew the designs by hand, three or four times print size, and eventually gave the originals to Madness fan Evan Dorkin.

*And, for those curious readers, on top of Dave's explanation (for reader Mark Badham-Moore, **CI** #177) we're printing the 1988 album sleeve (above left) and spin-off single "I Pronounce You" (above right). Sadly, the newly-reformed band (by then down to only four members) split up after this album.*

However, Dave's old pal and running mate Brian Bolland also got in on the act, drawing a Judge Dredd sleeve for The Fink Brothers (Suggs and Chas Smash) single, released both in 7" and 12" format (right). True Dredd-otees, Madness even had its own record label in 1984 entitled Zarjazz.

But Dave Gibbons' true claim to record sleeve fame must surely be for the 1996 Kula Shaker album K. It featured (right) a montage of Dave's K-named personality drawings and was the UK's second best selling album of the year, after Oasis's Definitely Maybe.

U.S.S. Stevens

Ilya War-Monger
14 Ropery Street, Bow
London E3 4QF edilya@hotmail.com

SAM Glanzman. Splendid name. "Glands-man". Anyhow, his *U.S.S. Stevens* series is a pretty unique achievement. 17 years in the making (1970-87).

As autobiographical as anything Harvey Pekar ("Pecker") or Eddie Campbell ("Soup". Splendid) ever did, and published in the mainstream by both DC and Marvel. Short stories up to 10 pages in length, but usually only four or five (filler in DC's splendiferous 1970s run of war titles).

Some *(The Sea is Calm, The Sky is Bright; Where...?; The Trinity)* are among the strongest comics ever produced. Cumulatively, they represent the most accurate picture of mankind at war achieved in pretty much any medium (check out the two Marvel graphic novels of **A Sailor's Story** for extended hits. And, to know more, www.geocities.com/usstevens).

There was a question here? Oh yeah. After years of search, I have all but two out of over 60 stories that I know of. One is in **Weird War Tales** 4 (1972), for when I see a copy I can afford.

The other is listed as *Even Dead Birds Have Wings*, in **Savage Tales** 9 (1987). That second run of **Savage Tales** magazine is worth having by the way: damn ugly for the most part, but a John Severin masterwork in every issue ("Severing". Splendid), and Glanzman in the last few.

Problem being, according to most sources the title ended at issue 8. I'm not certain **Savage Tales** 9 was ever published. Has anyone ever seen one?

So your passion for war comics is out in the open now, Ed! Always was a Severin and Kubert sucker myself.

*Spent half an hour, can't find a thing about **Savage Tales** #9 though. Was it v1 #9 that Kaluta did the cover art for?*

Marvel UK annuals

Chris Bunting via e-mail

SOMEONE recently asked about Marvel UK annuals. Here's a list of the ones that I used to own:

Marvel Annual 1974 – classic Spidey; origin of Daredevil; Star Raiders; Giant-Man; FF vs Hulk. Includes profiles.

Spider-Man Annual 1975 – Spidey and The Punisher, Jackal, Hammerhead, Doc Ock, the Torch, Giant Man/Wasp. Creators: Stan Lee, Dick Ayers, Gerry Conway, Ross Andru.

Marvel Annual 1975 – Hulk stories featuring: Hulk, Zzzax, Silver Surfer, Hawkeye, Captain Omen, Aquon and posters & pinups.

The Avengers Annual 1975 –Avengers stories, guest stars Daredevil, Black Widow, Magneto, Iceman, Black Panther, Cyclops, the X-Men, the Inhumans.

Spider-Man Annual 1976 – Spidey vs Dracula. Also stars Dinosaur Man, Black Panther, Fantastic Four and posters/pinups.

The Avengers Annual 1976 – guest-stars Squadron Supreme, Arkon, Black Panther, etc.

Spider-Man Annual 1977 – guest-stars Punisher, Doc Savage, Moses Magnum, etc

The Titans Annual 1977 – stars Captain America, X-Men, Namor, Frankenstein, etc.

The Mighty World of Marvel 1977 –starring DD, Man-Thing, FF, Galactus, Hulk, Surfer, etc

The Avengers Annual 1977 – starring Conan the Barbarian, Kang, Two-Gun Kid, etc.

Spider-Man Annual 1978 – guest-stars FF, Red Skull, Doc Ock and more.

The Titans Annual 1978 – starring FF, Annihilus, Black Widow and more.

Captain Britain Annual 1978 – by Chris Claremont, Herb Trimpe and Fred Kida.

Incrtedible Hulk Annual 1978 – vs Leader, Humanoids. Stories by Lee & Ditko. Posters.

The Mighty World of Marvel 1978 –stars: Cap Marvel, Cap America, Luke Cage, etc.

The Avengers Annual 1978 – guest-stars FF, X-Men, Doc Strange, Yellowjacket. Also Conan the Barbarian by Barry Smith.

The Superheroes Annual 1978 – stars Thor, Hercules, Spidey, Silver Surfer, FF. Also includes prose piece, puzzles and games

The Mighty World of Marvel Annual 1979 – stars Daredevil, Black Panther, Namor, etc.

The Incredible Hulk Annual 1979 – TV photo cover. Strips/text based on TV show.

The Incredible Hulk Annual 1979 – not same as above. Inhumans, Sub-Mariner, etc.

Spider-Man Annual 1979 – guest-stars Torch, Mysterio and others. Includes profiles.

Fantastic Four Annual 1979 – comic reprints and original illustrated prose stories. Also games and puzzles.

Superheroes Annual 1979 – starring Thor, Namor, Tiger Shark, Surfer vs Abomination.

Hulk Annual 1981 – guest-stars Leader, Mogol, Tyrannus and others.

Fantastic Annual 1969 – starring X-Men, Avengers, Miniman, Johnny Future, Iron Man.

Fantastic Four Annual 1969 – Lee & Kirby. Stars FF, Inhumans, Doctor Doom, and Klaw.

Fantastic Four Comic Annual 1969 – different annual to above. Starring FF, Doctor Doom & Wizard. By Stan Lee and Jack Kirby.

Marvel Comic Annual 1970 – stars Thor, Cap America, Hulk, Iron Man, Black Panther.

Spider-Man Annual 1975 – guest-stars The Punisher, Jackal, Doc Ock and Torch.

The Avengers Annual 1975 – guest-stars Magneto, DD, Black Panther and Ice Man.

The Avengers Annual 1976

Incredible Hulk Annual 1978 – classic Stan Lee and Steve Ditko Hulk tales.

Fantastic Four Annual 1979 – FF v Invaders

Spider-Man Annual 1979 – Spidey & Torch.

Incredible Hulk Annual 1979 – most, not all (inc comic strips) based on Hulk TV show.

Spider-Man Annual 1980 – Spidey, Scorpion, Lightmaster and others.

Incredible Hulk Annual 1980 – most not all (incl comic strips) based on Hulk TV show.

Fantastic Four Annual 1980 –creators featured: Stan Lee, Jack Kirby, Chris Claremont, J. Buscema. FF versus X-Men.

Spider-Man Annual 1983 – the death of the Green Goblin. Stars Gwen Stacy. Includes photos from live-action Spidey TV show.

Spider-Woman Annual 1983 – guest-stars the Hulk.

Spider-Man and Hulk Omnibus (year very likely 1983) – Marvel/Grandreams. Creators: Mooney, Trimpe, Wein, Thomas.

The Superheroes Special Edition (very likely early '80s) – produced exclusively for BHS (London) by Marvel/Grandreams. Creators: Buscema, Adams, Claremont, Thomas.With Surfer, Hulk, X-Men, Spidey, Ms Marvel, Thor.

Spider-Man Annual 1984 – creators featured: John Romita Jr, Roger Stern.

Spider-Man Annual 1985 – features Spidey, Cap America. Doc Ock, Torch and others. Creators: Lee, Ditko, Trimpe, DeFalco.

Madballs Annual 1987 – based on the popular '80s toyline.

The Super Heroes Annual 1989 – features Hulk vs Wolverine by Peter David and Todd McFarlane, X-Men, John Byrne's Fantastic Four and Spidey and his Amazing Friends.

The Amazing Spider-Man Annual 1990 – lots of work (including cover) by Todd McFarlane. Characters include Spidey, Prowler and Black Fox.

The Super Heroes Annual 1991 – X-Men, FF, Iron Man. Creators featured: John Bolton, Bill Manto, Greg Brooks, John Romita Jr.

The Amazing Spider-Man Annual 1991 – Tom DeFalco and Ron Frenz-created issues. Spidey vs Hobgoblin.

The Uncanny X-Men Annual 1992 – contains original artwork by Gary Frank. Chris Claremont and John Byrne-created issues.

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DECEMBER 11th, FEBRUARY 5th
November 13
GUEST ARTIST:
STAZ JOHNSON
(SPIDER-MAN etc)
LEEDS METROPOLITAN UNIVERSITY, BRUNSWICK HALL, MERRION WAY

LIVERPOOL
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NEWCASTLE
SATURDAYS: NOVEMBER 27th, JANUARY 15th
UNIVERSITY OF NORTHUMBRIA, STUDENTS' UNION BALLROOM,
SANDYFORD ROAD, NEWCASTLE-UPON-TYNE

NOTTINGHAM
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OPENS MIDDAY

Letters

CI, 345 Ditchling Rd, Brighton BN1 6JJ (editorial@comicsinternational.com)

PUT IT down to a combination of a crop of conventions, Tim (**Preacher Bible**) Pilcher getting a proper job and Liz not having started yet. But, as a result of us not chasing freelancers, we've lost a couple of columns this month. Both *Novel Graphics* and *Networks* have gone absent without leave. Their contributors have been given a good slap and normal service will be resumed next month.

On the subject of conventions, congrats and farewell to Kev F Sutherland, who ran his final event late October in London. All attendees reportedly enjoyed themselves, with two US first-timers so impressed they are coming back for guest at further UK events.

Despite a couple of major no-shows (Messrs Morrison and Ross, that's Grant and Jonathan, not Robbie and Alex!), the only critics seemed to be disenchanted fans with no interest in attending anyway.

Against seemingly overwhelming obstacles, for six years Kev almost singlehandedly managed to keep alive the annual traditional gathering (which dates way back to 1968). The baton has now been passed and I, for one, think Kev should be applauded for his unstinting and invariably unrewarded efforts.

It's sad to observe how, when it was about free passes and receiving awards, Kev was everybody's friend. When times got tough and foolish judgment calls were made to keep the event alive, there were those only too ready to publicly tear him down, irrespective of the potential harm such highlighting of mistakes could do to the entire industry.

We, as fans and/or professionals, should rally around when times are tough and a cry for help is issued (as in the Fantagraphics/Top Shelf/Alternative Comics distributor debacle two years ago and many a website cashflow problem). We should also promote and celebrate the ups instead of gossiping about the downs. How can we expect the outside world to want to come near us or treat us with any respect if we don't do so ourselves?

Good luck with everything, Kev. ...Dez Skinn/editor

The Real Shane Oakley

Shane Oakley via e-mail
(address withheld by request)

I'D BE the first to admit that I'm getting increasingly absent-minded in my old age. Am I getting up? Or am I going to bed? Is the dentist appointment at 2.30pm or 4.30pm? But one thing I'm really sure about is my nationality (*Sez Dez*, **CI**#177).

I'm NOT an American. I've never been an American. Damn, I ain't even visited the place!

I'm ENGLISH. As English as rotten weather, late buses and crappy shellsuits. I was born in Staffordshire, England, Great Britain – the UK! I've always lived here, and probably always will.

And unless I've been sacked by WildStorm and some American doppelganger/Earth 2 duplicate/robot double has taken my place, I'm the ONLY Shane Oakley who will be drawing the **Albion** mini.

Some wrists need a good slapping (yours first, Dez) for such skimpy and inaccurate journalism. It's all about doing the homework, am I right? You may/may not care for my art (the **Negative Burn** strip you highlighted was a really shitty job I did over 10 years ago) but I guarantee what Alan, John and Leah are doing will be like nothing seen before. It's a corker, and a pure joy to be working on.

If you want the facts, simply check out John and Leah's website. Rule Britannia!

Moral of the story: If you must listen to people who say they know what they're talking about, double check their facts anyway! Sorry, Shane, in a page of people getting good slaps, I'm not exempt.

*Good luck with the **Albion** mini, you've an entire country of comics fans rooting for you. Me. I'm just waiting for the US launch of Ken Reid's creations, never mind Chameleon Boy and Beast Boy, bring on **Faceache**!*

Albion scripters Leah Moore and John Reppion's website, by the way, can be found at http://uk.geocities.com/moore_reppion @btinternet.com

Further Confessions

Tim Dickens via e-mail:
Timdick2001@yahoo.co.uk

JUST a quick note to say how much I enjoyed Simon Cartmell's *Comment* (**CI** #176), "Comics Junkie Confesses All".

It certainly sounds like I have shared experiences with him. I'm 41, with a wife and two kids, and if Jude realised how much I've spent on comics during our 17 years of marriage (and several years together before that) there wouldn't be an 18th. Well, she's a forgiving soul, so there might be, but I'd be sleeping in the spare room for most of it!

I agree entirely with Simon's comments about the value of comics – the only time I ever think about how much a comic is worth is when bidding on eBay and then I usually just refer to Incognito's list in this magazine.

I have encouraged my 10-year old son to read some comics though, albeit mainly in collected editions. He loves **Ultimate Spider-Man** in hardback, **Ultimate X-Men** in paperback, and he managed to abduct the first eight issues of **Ultimate Fantastic Four**.

Perhaps Marvel's plan to attract new readers may work as he also enjoyed the **Runaways** collections, and Grant Morrison's **X-Men** hardcovers.

Anyway, thanks for a lovely piece; it might just inspire me to produce an article on why CGC-grading is bad for comics (and just bloody stupid too!).

Of course, both you and original confessor Simon Cartmell now have a problem. You've both joined the CCA – that's Comics Collectors Anonymous not the Comics Code Authority, although the badge would look pretty cool. As such you've admitted your addiction in a public forum.

Now, you're probably chuffed to get a letter published and would love to show your other half your name in print, but then she'd see your guilty secret. Worse, we could send her a complimentary copy of the issue in which she's mentioned. Remember the old Monty Python blackmail sketch?

You both have ten minutes from reading this, our address is at the top of the page and we've an outstanding £7,000 print bill...

Fleetway heroes

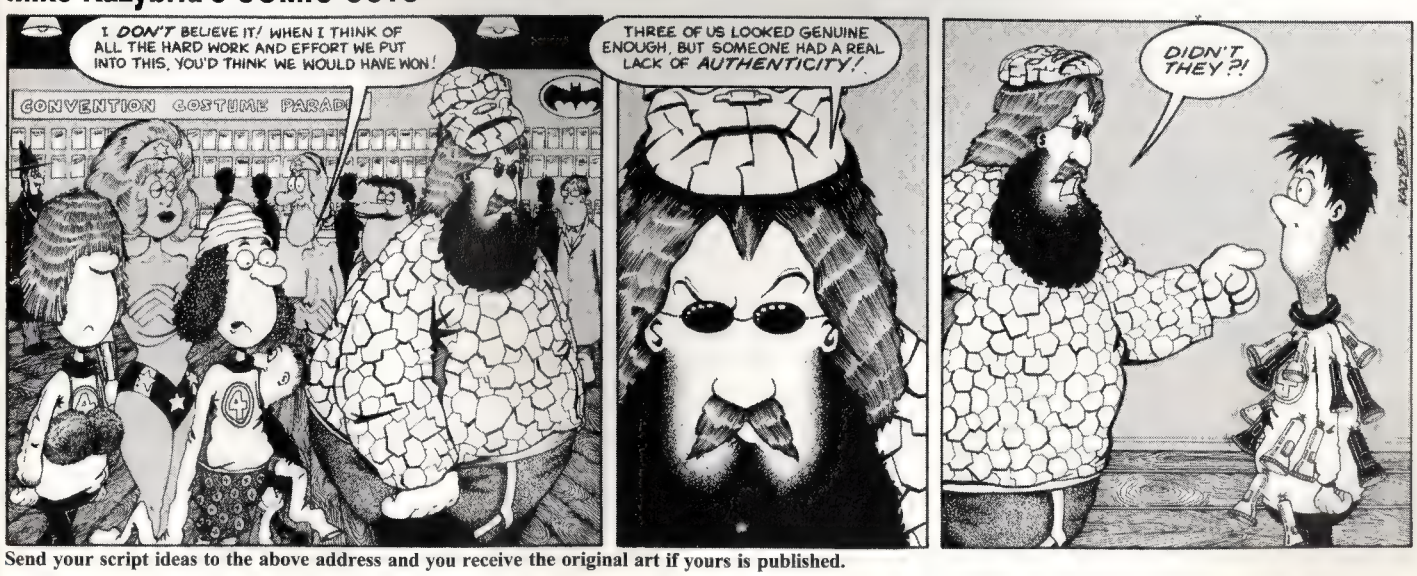
Chris Smillie via e-mail:
superherostore@yahoo.com

AS EDITOR of **Starscape** comic, I was very interested in the article on Alan Moore reviving the old UK IPC/Fleetway comics heroes. But I was more than a little disappointed that there was no mention anywhere that our mag has been printing Fleetway's *Leopard from Lime Street* from **Buster** comic for almost a year now. The character was even mentioned in your *Q&A*.

One of the main drivers for the *Leopard* reprints was the interest in these characters from readers of **Comics International**, yet the only mentions **CI** has ever given us have been in a paid-for advert and praise in a reader's letter.

How about a little 'hello' and a mention that we've also got

Mike Kazybrid's COMIC CUTS


I DON'T BELIEVE IT! WHEN I THINK OF ALL THE HARD WORK AND EFFORT WE PUT INTO THIS, YOU'D THINK WE WOULD HAVE WON!
CONVENTION COSTUME PARADE
THREE OF US LOOKED GENUINE ENOUGH, BUT SOMEONE HAD A REAL LACK OF AUTHENTICITY!
DIDN'T THEY?!
KAZYBRID

Send your script ideas to the above address and you receive the original art if yours is published.

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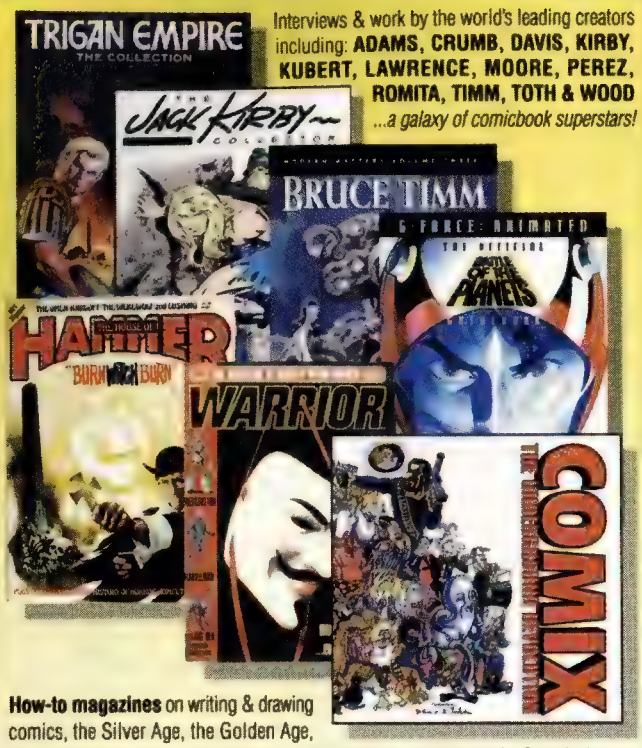

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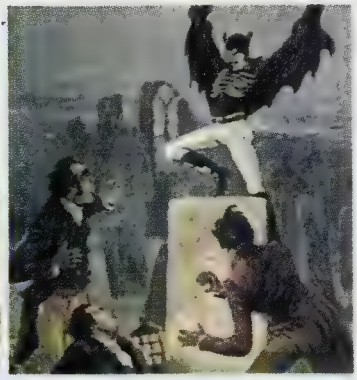

The original Batman: 1837 Blackheath, London

Julian Dass writes: The above are visuals from a late-19th century 'penny dreadful' featuring the mystery of Spring-Heeled Jack.

Besides the obvious remarkable resemblance to the relatively early-20th century Batman, there were several theories about his identity, favourites being that he was a circus acrobat (Dickie Grayson?) or alternatively the mad, bad Marquess of Waterford (the Wayne heir?). But it was thought that the legend inspired several real imitators to don a mask and cape and run around scaring people.

Something of an early urban legend, he was apparently first seen in 1837 attacking women (vamps?) in London, followed by numerous other sighting of him on a ledge outside Buckingham Palace a few weeks ago. Philip Pullman picked up on the story in his 1989 childrens' book **Spring-Heeled Jack** and turned him into a sort of Victorian-era Batman.

And, should anybody wish to check online, Historic-UK.com has the following intro to the character: "Out of the night he came, a leaping bounding superman..." *Sounds like there's somebody working there with their comics lore a bit skew-whiff to us! But it's also interesting to read the description of old Jack,* "wearing a tight fitting... costume, like an oilskin". *Ninteenth century spandex, anybody?*

writers from Marvel UK, DC Thomson and **2000AD** in our oft-ignored little comic?

*Ooh no, Chris. We could never do that. Otherwise we'd also have to plug all those other places reprinting old British strips, such as footy weekly **Striker** with its* Billy's Boots *serialisation and **Judge Dredd Megazine** with Charley's War.*

No, no ,no. That would never do. Could cost us advertisers if we started giving free plugs. By the way, you forget to mention your website (www.superherostore.co.uk) and your cover price (£2).

Re: Simian Scrolls

John Roche via e-mail:
mail@mediationhouse.com

RECEIVED my subscriber copy of #177 of **CI** yesterday. I like that – Conquistador gets over 30 pages in the middle of the magazine and we only get a quarter page for **Simian Scrolls**! Seriously, many, many thanks for the plug – I am chuffed to bits with it and we look like a professional outfit.

In fact, the kind people at Conquistador were actually the people who put me in touch with the old *Planet of the Apes* artist John Bolton.

The comments made by Simon Cartmell in this issue ring true to my life to a quite disturbing degree, apart from me not having any kids (I couldn't really afford them with this habit!).

Sincere thanks again. Surprise acts of help and kindness like this are, I'm glad to say, alive and well within the fanzine world and it is good to know that Dez Skinn still has the genuine heart of a fan, not withstanding all of the shit that's thrown at him.

As a wise man once summed it up, "Envy is more irreconcilable than hatred".

But remember John, only those living in shit have any ammunition! Best to ignore them, they'll get bored and go away. Me, I'm more of the old live-and-let-live school. If you haven't got anything nice to say...

Dreamwave's Transformers

P. Hodgson
11 Kestrel Road
Scunthorpe, Lincs DN17 1LZ

I'M CURRENTLY thoroughly enjoying the whole line of Dreamwave's **Transformers** comics, although I like all the stories by Simon Furman the best.

But why does Simon have to amend his stories to suit Brad Mick plugging stories? Over here in the UK we didn't get to see the cartoon – until we got the DVDs.

Simon should be allowed to write what he wants on **War Within**, not having to do what Mick wants (i.e. the clone jets!).

Unfortunately, with adaptations of licenced properties you rarely have the opportunity to "write what you want".

If you take such a job on, you have to write what the licensor will allow, which, from all reports can be very very frustrating and equally restrictive.

Directory

An at-a-glance reference guide to everything that counts in comics

Internet Listings

Comics creators

Jessica Abel ..... www.artbabe.com
Neal Adams ..... www.nealadams.com
Kyle Baker ..... www.kylebaker.com
Leo Baxendale ..... www.reaper.co.uk/main.htm
Brian Bolland Art ..... www.velouria.com/Bolland
Mark Bright ..... www.mdbright.com
Eddie Campbell ..... www.eddiecampbellcomics.com
John Cassaday ..... www.johncassaday.com
Gene Colan ..... www.genecolan.com
Chuck Dixon ..... www.dixonverse.com
Will Eisner ..... www.willeisner.tripod.com
Warren Ellis ..... www.warrenellis.com
Phil Foglio ..... www.studiofoglio.com
Jon Haward ..... www.jonhawardart.com
Jeff Jones ..... www.jeffreyjones.com
Bob Layton ..... www.boblayton.com
Joseph Michael Linsner ..... www.linsner.com
Tom Lyle ..... www.tomlyle.com
Scott McCloud ..... www.scottmcloud.com
Grant Morrison ..... www.grant-morrison.com
Alex Ross Art ..... www.alexrossart.com
Dave Stevens ..... www.davestevens.com
William Stout ..... www.williamstout.com
Bryan Talbot ..... www.bryan-talbot.com
Barry Windsor-Smith .. www.barrywindsor-smith.com
Bernie Wrightson ..... www.berniewrightson.com

Comics publishers

Abstract Studios ..... www.strangersinparadise.com
AC Comics ..... www.accomics.com
Acclaim ..... ww.acclaim.com/comics
AiT/Planet Lar ..... www.astronautsintrouble.com
Antarctic Press ..... www.antarctic-press.com
AP Comics ..... www.apcomics.com
Archie Comic Publications ... www.archiecomics.com
Caliber Comics ..... www.calibercomics.com
Cartoon Books ..... www.boneville.com
Chaos! ..... www.chaoscomics.com
com.x ..... www.comxcomics.com
CrossGen ..... www.crossgen.com
Crusade Entertainment ..... www.shiweb.com
Dark Horse ..... www.darkhorse.com
DC Comics ..... www.dccomics.com
Drawn and Quarterly ..... www.drawnandquarterly.com
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Fantagraphics ..... www.fantagraphics.com
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Northern Lightz ..... www.northernlightz.com
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Todd McFarlane Productions ..... www.spawn.com
Top Cow Comics ..... www.topcow.com
TwoMorrows ..... www.twomorrows.com
2000 AD www.2000ADonline.com
Viz (USA) ..... www.viz.com
Viz (UK) ..... www.viz.co.uk
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QUICKSILVER COMICS
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SILVER ACRE COMICS
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Speeding Bullet ..... www.speedingbulletcomics.co.uk

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Retail Index: UK

Key to the abbreviations used:

imp	= air imported new issues	ind	= independent comics
back	= back issues stocked	u/g	= underground comix
gn	= graphic novels	prl	= peripherals/supplies
tpbk	= trade paperbacks	RPG	= role playing games
STO	= standing order service (new comics reserved)	CCG	= customisable card games
		merch	= trading cards, videos, t-shirts, posters, etc
s-p	= small press and fanzines		

Sorry, no websites, this is a shop guide

When telephoning from outside the UK, drop the first 0 and replace with: 01144 (USA); 0044 (mainland Europe & Eire); 001144 (Australasia).

Central London

Avalon Comics, 143 Lavender Hill, Battersea, London SW11 5QJ. Mon-Thurs 10-5.45; Fri 10-6.30; Sat 9.30-5.30; Sun 11-3.30 (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STO, ind, prl, CCG, merch) 020 7924 3609

Book & Comic Exchange, 14 Pembridge Road, Notting Hill Gate, London W11. Mon-Sun 10-8. Nothing legal refused! (back, ind, u/g) 020 7229 8420

Comic Showcase 63 Charing Cross Road, London WC2H 0NE. Sun-Wed 10-7; Thurs-Fri 10-8; Sat 9.30-8 (imp, back, s-p, ind, u/g, merch, cartoon books, original art) 020 7434 4349

Forbidden Planet Megastore, 179 Shaftesbury Avenue, London WC2H 8JR. Mon-Wed 10-7; Thurs 10-8; Sat 10-7; Sun 12-6 (imp, back, gn, STO, s-p, ind, RPG, CCG, merch, sci-fi/fantasy, books, video/DVD, games, mags, toys) 020 7420 3666

Gosh!, 39 Great Russell Street, London WC1B 3PH (opposite British Museum). Mon-Wed 10-6; Thurs-Fri 10-7; Sat-Sun 10-6 (imp, back, STO, ind, u/g, merch, foreign, largest range newspaper strip compilations in UK) 020 7636 1011

Mega-City Comics, 18 Inverness Street, Camden Town, London NW1 7HJ. Mon-Wed 10-6; Thurs-Fri 10-7; Sat-Sun 10-6 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, merch, film/TV, fantasy/horror, body art, subculture) 020 7485 9320

Mighty World of Comicana, 237 Shaftsbury Avenue, London WC2H 8EH. Mon-Wed 10.30-6.30; Thurs-Sat 10-7; Sun 10-4 (imp, back, STO, ind, merch, film/TV/fantasy) 020 7836 5630

Orbital, 9 Old Compton Street, London W1. Mon-Sat 10.30-7; Sun 11-5 (imp, back, gn, STO, manga, toys, Star Wars) 020 7434 9363

Outer London

A Place in Space, 101 Church Street, Croydon, Surrey CR0 1RN. Mon-Sat 9.30-5.30 (imp, back, STO, ind, RPG, CCG, prl, merch, sci-fi, original art) 020 8686 2400

Ashcan Ltd, 3 Eagle Star House, 299-301 High Street, Sutton, Surrey SM1 1LG. Tues-Wed/Fri 12-5; Thurs 9-6; Sat 10-5 (imp, back, STO, ind, merch) 0845 166 2532

Atomic Comics, 1112 High Road, Chadwell Heath, Romford, Essex RM6 4AH. Mon-Tues 10.30-5.30; Wed 1-5.30; Thurs-Fri 10.30-6; Sat 10-6 (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STO, ind, u/g, prl, RPG, CCG, merch, film/TV, art books, Games Workshop, toys, kits) 020 8597 8547

Calamity Comics, 160 Station Road, Harrow, Middlesex HA1 2HR. Mon-Wed 10-6; Thurs-Fri 10-7; Sat 9.30-6 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, RPG, merch, fantasy film/TV, books, videos) 020 8427 3831

Epic Heroes, 21/23 Station Road, Edgware, Middlesex HA8 7JE. Mon-Sat 10-6. (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STO, RPG, CCG, merch, toys, posters, Transformers) 020 8952 7181

Forbidden Planet, 175 North End, Croydon CR0 1TP. Mon-Wed 10-6; Thurs 10-7; Fri 10-6; Sat 9.30-6. (back, gn, tpbk, STO, ind, u/g, CCG, merch) 020 8688 7190

Krypton Komics, 252 High Road, Tottenham, London N15 4AJ (next to Tesco) Tues-Wed 11-6; Thurs 10.30-7; Fri 10.30-6; Sat 10-6 Nearest Tube: Seven Sisters Road. (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind) 020 8801 5378 fax: 8376 3174

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Cartoon Shop, 19 East Square, Basildon, Essex SS14 1HT. Mon-Sat 10-6 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, RPG, merch) 01268 534194

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Forbidden Planet, 44 The Priory Centre, Dartford, Kent DA1 2HS. Mon-Wed 10.30-5.30; Thurs-Sat 10-5.30 (back, gn, ind, PRG, CCG, merch) 01322 224837

Incognito Comic Shop, 1-2 The Friars, Canterbury, Kent CT1 2AS. Mon-Fri 10-5.30; Sat 9-5.30 (imp, back, STO, ind, merch, film/TV) tel/fax: 01227 785898

Off World: The Sci-Fi Store, 142 Market Halls, Arndale Centre, Luton LU1 2TP. Mon-Sat 9.30-5 (imp, STO, s-p, CCG, merch, Star Trek/Wars, sci-fi collectables) 01582 736256

Phoenix Fantasy, 9 Market Street, Margate, Kent CT9 1EU. Mon-Sat 10-6 (imp, back, STO, ind, RPG, CCG, merch) 01843 224768

Planet Ace, 324-325 Chartwell North, Top Floor, Victoria Plaza, Southend-on-Sea, Essex SS2 5SR. Mon-Sat 9.30-5.30 (imp, back, STO, ind, u/g, merch) 01702 613021

Steve's Comics, The Bookstall, Beckenham Junction Station, Rectory Road, Beckenham, Kent BR3 1HY. Mon-Fri 6-7; Sat 7-5 (back – Marvel, DC – ind, British comics, tpbk) 07977 751442

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Midlands

Abstract Sprocket, 29 St Benedicts Street, Norwich, Norfolk NR2 4PF. Mon-Sat 10-5 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, merch) 01603 624410

Close Encounters, 59 Midland Road, Bedford MK10 1PW. Mon-Fri 10-6; Sat 9-6; Sun 11-5 (imp, back, gn, merch, video, DVDs, action figures, t-shirts, trading cards) 01234 270777

Comic Culture, The Mall, 257-259 High Street, Lincoln LN2 1HX. Mon-Fri 10-5; Sat 9-5 (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STO, prl) 01522 546611

Forbidden Planet, 31 Cross Cheaping, Coventry CV1 1HF. Mon-Wed 9.30-6; Thurs 9.30-7; Fri-Sat 9.30-6 (imp, back, STO, ind, u/g, RPG, CCG, merch, film/TV) 02476 229672

Forbidden Planet (FPI), 129 Middle Walk, Broadmarsh Centre, Nottingham NG1 7LN. Mon-Sat 9-6 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, merch, film/TV) 0115 958 4706

Forbidden Planet Superstore, 38 Priory Queensway, Birmingham B4 7LA. Mon-Sat 9.30-5.30 (Thurs-Fri to 6) (imp, back, gn, STO, ind, RPG, CCG, merch, books, games, mags, kits, toys, videos) 0121 236 3026

MOVED **FPI Derby**, 1/2 The Corn Exchange, Albert Street, Derby DE1 2DS. Mon-Fri 9.30-5.30; Sat 9-5.30, Sun 12-4 (imp, back, STO, ind, RPG, merch, rock/film/TV memorabilia, video games) 01332 206606

FPI Hanley, 52 Stafford Street, Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent ST1 1JB. Mon-Fri 9.30-5.30; Sat 9-5.30; Sun 12-4 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, RPG, merch, rock memorabilia, alchemy metalware) 01782 279294 fax: 202381

FPI Leicester, 23 Silver Street, Leicester LE1 5EU. Mon-Fri 10-5.30; Sat 9-5.30; Sun 12-4 (imp, back, STO, ind, u/g, RPG, merch, foreign, alchemy metalware, rock memorabilia) 0116 2515266

MOVED **FPI Nottingham**, 19-23 Friar Lane, Nottingham NG1 6DA. Mon-Fri 9.30-5.30; Sat 9-5.30; Sun 12-4 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, RPG, merch, foreign, rock memorabilia, alchemy metalware) 0115 9484122

FPI Wolverhampton, 23 Victoria Street, Wolverhampton WV1 3NP. Mon-Fri 10-5.30; Sat 9-5.30; Sun 12-4 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, RPG, merch, rock memorabilia, alchemy metalware) 01902 717440

Ground Zero, 9 Toothill Lane, Mansfield, Nottinghamshire NG18 1NJ. Mon-Sat 9-5 (imp, back, STO, prl, CCG, merch, toys) 01623 622017

Nostalgia & Comics (FPI), 14-16 Smallbrook, Queensway, Birmingham. Mon-Thurs 9.15-5.45; Fri-Sat 9.15-6 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, merch) 0121 643 0143

Page 45, 9 Market Street, Nottingham NG1 6HY. Mon-Sat 9-6. (imp, back, gn, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, merch, manga) 0115 950 8045

Phoenix Comix, 29 Abington Square, Northampton NN1 4AE. Mon-Sat 9.30-5 (imp, back, STO, ind, merch, RPG, CCG, action figures) 01604 602311

Travelling Man, c/o Gamestation, 1st Floor, 6 East Street, Derby DE1. Mon-Sat 9-5 (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STO, prl, RPG, CCG, merch, action figures, fantasy books, film/TV) 0115 950 9231

Travelling Man, c/o Gamestation, 1st Floor, 16 Angel Row, Nottingham NG1 6HL. Mon-Sat 9.30-5.30 (imp, back, STO, ind, RPG, CCG, merch, action figures, miniatures) 0115 950 9231

North West

All-American, 102 Newport Street, Bolton BL3 6AB. Mon-Sat 10-6 (imp, back, gn, STO, merch, Star Wars, WWF, action figures, S/Age, videos, records, CDs) 01204 366553

Alpha Omega Comics, 33-35 Library Street, Wigan, Lancs WN1 1NN. Mon-Sat 9.30-5 (imp, back, STO, merch, videos) 07796 854644

Batcave, 39 Penny Street, Blackburn, Lancashire BB1 6HQ. Mon-Sat 10-5 (imp, back, gn, STO, RPG, CCG, merch) 01254 667488

Forbidden Planet, 92 Bold Street, Liverpool L1 4HY. Mon-Wed 9.30-5.30; Thurs 9.30-7; Fri-Sat 9.30-5.30 (imp, back, STO, ind, u/g, RPG, CCG, merch, film/TV, sci-fi horror) 0151 707 1491

Forbidden Planet Megastore (FPI), 65 Oldham Street, Piccadilly, Manchester M1 1JR. Mon-Sat 9.30-5.30; Sun 12-5 (two floors; imp, back, STO, RPG, CCG, merch, books, toys, film and TV tie-ins, manga) 0161 839 4777

Imagination Station, 41 Bank Street, Carlisle, Cumbria CA3 8HJ. Mon-Sat 9.30-5 (imp, back, STO, ind, merch)

Millennium Comics, 4 Church Road, Northwich, Cheshire CW9 5NT. Mon-Tues 10-5; Thurs-Fri 10-5.30; Sat 9-5 (imp, back, STO, s-p, RPG, merch, action figures, toys) 01606 49255

Thunderbooks, 332 Lytham Road, Blackpool, Lancashire FY4 1DW. Mon/Tues/Thurs-Sat (Sundays in June-Oct only) 10-5.30; Wed 1-3.30 (imp, back, STO, ind, merch, media collectors' items) 01253 348321 fax: 407813

Thunderbooks II, 116 Friargate, Preston, Lancashire PR1 9EE. Mon-Sat 10-5.30 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, RPG, merch) 01772 204287

Time Tunnel, 13 Earle Street, Crewe, Cheshire CW1 2BS. Mon and Wed-Sat 9.30-6 (imp, back, STO, merch, film/TV memorabilia, action figures, videos, model kits) 01270 215496

Worlds Apart (FPI), 58-60 Lime Street (city centre), Liverpool. Mon-Sat 10-6; Sun 11-5 (imp, back, STO, ind, merch, film) 0151 707 0839

North East

Books 'N' Comics, Unit 15, Forbes Building, Linthorpe Road, Middlesbrough, Cleveland TS1 4AW. Mon-Sat 10-5.30 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, merch, fantasy and film magazines, Doctor Who/Star Trek) 01642 249143

Forbidden Planet (FPI), 30 Eastgate, The Headrow, Leeds LS2 7JL. Mon-Sat 9.30-5.30 (imp, back, LF film books, film/TV mags, posters, toys, kits, trading cards, stills, Star Trek/Doctor Who) 0113 242 6325

Forbidden Planet, 59 Grainger Street, Newcastle NE1 5JE. Mon-Sat 10-6 (imp, back, STO, ind, u/g, merch, film/TV mags, fantasy/sci-fi books, videos) 0191 261 9173

Forbidden Planet (FPI), 41 Dundas Street, Middlesbrough TS1 1HR. Mon-Wed 9.30-5.30; Thurs 9.30-7; Fri-Sat 9.30-5.30 (imp, gn, s-p, STO, ind, u/g, prl, RPG, CCG, merch, video, action figures, film/TV, manga) 01642 248889

Forbidden Planet (FPI), 12 Matilda, off the Moor, Sheffield. Mon-Fri 10-5; Sat 9.30- 5.30 (imp, back, s-p, ind, u/g, merch, original art, model kits, sci-fi/fantasy books, horror magazines, newspaper strip books) 0114 276 9475

The Last Picture Show, 38-39 The Lanes, The Oasis, Meadowhall Centre, Sheffield S9 1EP. Mon-Thurs 10-8; Fri 10-9; Sat 9-7, Sun 11-5 (imp, back, STO, ind, RPG, CCG, merch, film/TV and rock memorabilia) 0114 256 9604 fax: 255 3399

Millennium Comics, Stall 141, Warrington Indoor Market. Mon-Sat 9-5 (imp, back, STO, s-p, RPG, merch, action figures, toys) 01925 575657

Off-World Comics, 200 Park View, Whitley Bay, Tyne & Wear NE26 3QP. Mon-Tues/Thurs 10-5.30 (closed Wed); Fri 10-6; Sat 10-5.30 (imp, back, STO, ind, CCG, merch) 0191 251 2288

OK Comics, 19 Thorntons Arcade, Briggate, Leeds LS1 6LQ. (imp, back, gn, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, prl) 0113 2469366

Sheffield Space Centre, 33 The Wicker, Sheffield. Mon-Tues/Thurs-Sat 10-5 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, merch, Star Trek specialists) 0114 275 8905

Travelling Man, Unit 8/9, The Corn Exchange, Call Lane, Leeds LS1 7BR. Mon-Thurs 10-5.30; Fri-Sat 9-5.30; Sun 11-5 (imp, back, STO, ind, RPG, CCG, merch, action figures) 0113 242 7227

Travelling Man, 54 Goodramgate, York YO1 2LF. Mon-Sat 10-5.30 (imp, back, STO, ind, RPG, CCG, merch, action figures) 01904 628787

2Tone Comics, 40 Market Street, Hebden Bridge, West Yorkshire HX7 6AA. Sat-Sun 10.30-5.30 (imp, back, gn,

tpbk, STO, ind, prl, merch, CGC) 01422 845666

West Country

American Dream Comics, 72 Walcot Street, Bath BA1 5BD. Mon-Fri 10-5; Sat 10-5.30 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, merch, original art, hobby kits, CDs) 01225 424881

American Graffiti, 78 Church Lane, Barnstaple, Devon EX31 1BH. Mon-Sat 9-5 (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, merch) 01271 325740

Area 51, 143 Gloucester Road, Bristol. Mon-Sat 10-5.30 (imp, back, STO, ind, u/g, RPG, merch, original art) 0117 924 4655

Automattic Comics, Unit 2, 17 Pickwick Road, Corsham SN13 9BQ. Mon-Tues 12-5; Thurs-Sat 10-6 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, merch) 01249 701647

Collector's Choice, 45 Southgate Street, Gloucester GL1 1TX. Mon-Sat 9-5 (S/Age, British comics/annuals, vintage mags, toys, memorabilia) 01452 410232

Fantasyland Comics, Unit 4, The Colwell Centre, Weymouth, Dorset DT4 8NJ. Mon-Fri 11-5; Sat 10-5 (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STO, ind, RPG, CCG, merch)

Forbidden Planet, 30 Penn Street, Bristol BS1 3AS. Mon-Wed 9.30-5.30; Thurs 9.30-7; Fri 9.30-5.30; Sat 9.30-6 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, merch, film/TV mags, subculture) 0117 929 8692

Forbidden Planet, 43-45 East Street, Southampton SO14 3HN. Mon-Wed 9.30-5.30; Thurs 9.30-6; Fri 9.30-5.30; Sat 9.30-6 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, merch, film/TV)023 80230991 fax: 230996

Ian's Books & Comics, 195a Albert Road, Southsea, Portsmouth PO4 0JP (next to Tesco). Mon-Tues/Thurs-Fri 10.30-5.15 (Wed closed); Sat 10-5.15 (imp, back, tpbk, STO, s-p, prl, toys) 023 92422731

Into the Void, 11 Rodbourne Road, Swindon SN2 2AG. Mon-Sat 9-5 (imp, back, STO, CCG, merch)01793 434363

Kaboom, 65 High Street, Totnes, Devon TQ10 9PU. (new, back, action figures, t-shirts, board games, RPG, import video games, mail order) 01803 863049

Kathies Comics, Unit BG29, Broadmead Gallery, The Galleries Shopping Centre, Bristol BS1 3XB. Mon-Wed/Fri-Sat 9-5.30; Thurs 9-6; Sun 11-5.30 (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STO, ind, prl, CCG, merch) 0117 922 1170

Kathies Comics, 20 Market Avenue, Plymouth, PL1 1PH. Mon-Fri 9.30-5.30; Sat 9-5.30 (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STO, ind, prl, CCG, merch) 01752 257800

Paradox Comics, 17 High St, Poole, Dorset BH15 1AB. Mon-Fri 10.30-5; Sat 10-5 (imp, back, gn, STO, ind, merch, videos) 01202 661346

Wonderworld, 540 Christchurch Road, Boscombe, Bournemouth, Dorset. Mon-Sat 9-5.30 (imp, back, STO, ind, CCG, merch, film/TV/media, beanie babies) 01202 394918

Wales

Cardiff's Comic Guru Presents!, 20-22 Wyndham Arcade, Cardiff CF10 1FJ. Mon-Wed 10-6; Thurs 10-9; Fri-Sat 10-6 (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, prl, CCG, merch) 029 202 29119

Cardiff Fantasy Centre, 1st Floor, Jacobs Market, West Canal Wharf, Cardiff. Sat 9.30-4.30 (imp, back, STO; established over 20 years) 029 206 58184 (eves)

Comix Shoppe, 13 Shoppers Walk, Swansea SA1 3AY. Mon-Fri 10-5; Sat 10-5.30 (imp, back, STO, ind, u/g, RPG, CCG, merch, anime, Games Workshop) 01792 642097

Forbidden Planet (FPI), 5 Duke Street, Cardiff. Mon-Wed 10-5.30; Thurs 10-6.30; Fri 10-5.30; Sat 10-6 (imp, back, STO, ind, u/g, merch, sci-fi fantasy/horror books, Star Trek/Wars) 029 202 28885

Negative Zone, Provision Market Gallery, High Street, Newport, Gwent NP9 1DD. Mon-Sat 9.30-5 (imp, back, gn, STO, s-p, ind; established for 12 years) 01633 222159

Scotland

Asylum Books & Games, 29 Adelphi, Aberdeen AB11 5B2. Mon 10-8; Tues-Wed 10-6; Thurs 10-8; Fri-Sat 10-6; Sun 12-5 (imp, back, STO, new/second hand RPG, CCG, books, original art) 01224 574637

Black Hole Comic Shop, Unit 3, 5 Victoria Road, Dundee DD1 1ER. Mon-Thurs 10-5; Fri-Sat 10-5.30 (imp, back, STO, ind, second hand records, CDs, videos) 01382 221037

City Centre Comics, 51 Parnie Street, Glasgow G1 5LU. Tues-Sat 10-5 (back) 0141 552 2208

Forbidden Planet (FPI), 12 Schoolhill, Aberdeen AB10 1JX. Mon-Wed 10-6; Thurs 10-7; Fri 10-6; Sat 9.30-5.30; Sun 12-5 (imp, gn, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, prl, CCG, merch) 01224 622131

Forbidden Planet (FPI), 40-41 South Bridge, Edinburgh EH1 1LL. Mon-Wed 10-5.30; Thurs 10-6.30; Fri-Sat 10-5.30; Sun 12-5. (imp, STO, s-p, ind, merch, foreign) 0131 558 8226

Forbidden Planet (FPI), 168 Buchanan Street, Glasgow G1 2LW. Mon-Sat 10-5.30; Sun 12-5 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, merch) 0141 331 1215

Justice Comics, Unit 36, The Arcade, Stirling FK8 1AX. Mon-Sat 10-5 (imp, back, STO, ind, merch) 01786 447687

Kapow!, 28 Allison Street, Govanhill, Glasgow G42 8NN (off Pollokshaws Rd). Tues-Sat 11-6 (buy and sell back, gn, ind, mags, videos, DVDs, new and second-hand books, merch) 0141 4241600

Plan 9, 9 Rosemount Viaduct, Aberdeen AB25 1NE. Mon-Wed 10-5; Thurs 10-6; Fri-Sat 10-5; Sun 1-4. (imp, back, STO, ind, RPG, CCG, WWF, merch, sci-fi) tel/fax: 01224 624467

Red Hot Comics, Block D Unit 7, Glenwood Business Park, Glenwood Place, Glasgow G45 9UH. Mon-Sat 11.30-5.30; Sun 12-5 (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STO, ind, prl, CCG, merch) 0141 630 0049

Northern Ireland

Forbidden Planet (FPI), 52-54 Ann Street, Belfast BT1 4EG Mon-Wed 9-5.30; Thurs 9-8.30; Fri-Sat 9-5.30; Sun 1-5 (imp, back, STO, ind, u/g, merch) 028 90438744

Planet Ace Derry, 33 Shipquat St, Derry, Londonderry BT48 6DF. Mon-Sat 10-6 (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STO, ind, prl, RPG, CCG, merch) 02871 369787

Retail Index: USA

When telephoning from outside the USA, include the bracketed 00. Out-of-town US calls begin with the 1 prefix only. The following is a fraction of the estimated 3,000+ US comics stores.

Alabama

Optic Nerve, 1930 12th Avenue South, Birmingham, AL 35205 (film, newsstand, ind) (00)1 205 933 2787

Alaska

Bosco's in Spenard, 2606 Spenard Road, Anchorage 99503. Mon-Sat 11-8, Sun 12-6 (new, back, CCG, RPG, cards, anime, merch) (00) 1 907 274 4112

Bosco's Diamond Centre, 800 East Diamond Boulevard, Anchorage 99577. Mon-Fri 10-9; Sat 10-6; Sun 12-5 (new, back, CCG, RPG, cards, anime, games, Star Wars/Trek) (00) 1 907 344 3963

Bosco's in Eagle River, 11432 Business Boulevard, Eagle River. Mon-Sat 12-8, Sun 12-5 (new, back, CCG, RPG, cards, merch) (00) 1 907 696 5166

Arizona

Lost Dutchman, 747 West Camelback Road, Phoenix, AZ 85013. Mon-Sun 10-7. (new, back) (00)1 619 278 0371

California

Comickaze, 5525 Clairemont Mesa Boulevard, San Diego, CA 62117-2342. Mon-Fri 11-7; Sat 11-6; Sun 12-6 (new, back, CCG, merch)(00)1 858 278 0371

Comix Experience, 305 Divisadero Street, San Francisco, CA 94117. Mon-Sat 11-7; Sun 12-5 (new, back) (00)1 415 863 9258

Flying Colors Comics, 2980 Treat Blvd, Concord, CA 94518. Mon-Sat 11-7 (Fri until 8); Sun 12-6 (new, back, ind, cards, merch) (00)1 510 825 5410

Lee's Comics, Inc., 1020-F N Rengstorff Avenue, Mountain View, CA 94043. Mon-Sun 10-9 (new, back: 1930s to date, anime, manga, s-p, adult, merch) (00)1 650 965 1800

Lee's Comics, Inc., 2222 South El Camino Real, San Mateo, CA 94403. Mon-Sun 10-9, (new, back: 1930s to date, anime, manga, adult, s-p, merch) (00)1 650 571 1489

Meltdown Comics & Collectibles, 7522 Sunset Boulevard, Los Angeles, CA 90046 (toys, comics, books) (00)1 323 851 7223

Stand-Up Comics, 10020 San Pablo Avenue, El Cerrito, CA 94530. Mon-Fri 11 7; Sat-Sun 11-6 (new, back, cards, anime, CCG, merch) (00)1 510 525 3344

Third Planet, 3822 Sepulveda Boulevard, Torrance, CA 90505. Sun-Thurs 11-8; Fri + Sat 11-9 (new, ind, back, CCG, RPG, GW, sci-fi/fantasy, anime, merch) (00)1 310 791 6227

Hawaii

Gecko Books & Comics, 3613 Waialae Avenue, Honolulu, 96816. Mon-Sun 9-9 (new, back, cards, toys, merch) (00)1 808 732 1292

Illinois

Comic Kingdom, 5941 W Irving Park Road, Chicago, IL 60634. (new, back) (00)1 773 545 2231

Louisiana

Comic Cosmos, 343 W Esplanade Avenue, Kenner, LA 70065. Mon-Thur 11.30-7, Fri-Sat 11-7.30, Sun 12-5 (new, back, cards, CCG, toys, anime) (00)1 504 286 0039

Crescent City Comics & Cards, 6111 Elysian Fields, New Orleans, LA 70122. Mon-Sat 11-7, Sun 12-6 (new, back, cards, CCG, RPG, anime) (00)1 504 286 0039

More Fun Comics, 8200 Oak Street, New Orleans, LA 70118. Tues-Sat 11-7, Sun-Mon 12-6 (new, back, cards, CCG, merch, toys, CDs) (00)1 504 865 1800

Maine

Casablanca Comics, 151 Middle Street, Portland, ME 04101. Mon-Sat 10-9, Sun 12-7 (new, back, cards, CCG, RPG, merch, art) (00)1 207 780 1676

Casablanca Comics, 778 Roosevelt Trail, Windham, ME 04062. Mon-Fri 11-7, Sat 10-6, Sun 12-5 (new, back, CCG, RPG, merch)(00)1 207 892 0056

Massachusetts

Comicopia, 464 Commonwealth Avenue, Boston, Massachusetts 02215. Mon-Sun 11-7 (Wed 10-8) (new, merch, CCG, manga, tpbk)(00)1 617 266 4266

Minnesota

Uncle Sven's Comic Shoppe, 1838 St Clair Avenue, Saint Paul, MN 55105. Mon-Fri 3-6, Sat 11-4 (new, back, tpbk, gn, videos, action figures, CCG, RPG; est 19 years) (00)1 651 699 3409

New York State

Earthworld Comics, 327 Central Avenue, Albany, NY 12206. Mon-Wed 11-6; Thur-Fri 11-7, Sat 11-6, Sun 12-5 (new, back, ind, manga/anime, cards, merch) (00)1 518 465 5495

Forbidden Planet (FPI associate), 840 Broadway (at 13th St, NY 10003. Mon-Sat 10-10; Sun 12-10. (new, ind, back, RPG, merch, fantasy) (00)1 212 473 1576

Jim Hanley's Universe Ltd, 4 West 33rd Street (opposite Empire State Building), NY 10001. Mon-Sat 9am-11pm; Sun 10-9. (Everything to do with comics) (00)1 212 268 7088

Jim Hanley's Universe Ltd, 325 New Dorp Lane, Staten Island, NY 10306. Mon-Sun; 12-9. (Everything to do with comics) (00)1 718 351 6299

Midtown Comics, 200 West 40th Street, NY 10018 (00)1 212 302-8192

Ohio

The Laughing Ogre, 4258 North High Street, Columbus, Ohio 43214. Mon-Sat 10-9; Sun 12-5 (new, back, cards, merch) (00)1 614 267 6473

Oklahoma

Time Warp, 588 SE Washington Street, Bartlesville, OK 74006 (new, back, cards, games, toys, CDs, sci-fi/fantasy) (00)1 918 335 3373

Pennsylvania

Comic Castle, 17 West Fourth Street, Williamsport, PA 17703 Mon-Sun 10-9 (new, back) (00)1 717 322 8763

Golden Eagle, Berkshire Square, 1159 Berkshire Boulevard, Wyoming, PA 19610 (new, back, games, CCG, cards, Star Wars/Trek) (00)1 610 376 8255

Golden Eagle, Fairgrounds Square Mall, Reading, PA 19605 (new, back, games, CCG, cards, Star Wars/Trek) (00)1 610 921 3160

Tennessee

Collector's World, 1511 E Main Street, Murfreesboro, TN 37130. Open all week (new, back, CCG, merch, cards, CDs) (00)1 615 895 1120

Collector's World, Hickory Plaza South Central, 5751 Nolensville Road, Nashville, TN 37211. Open all week (new, back, CCG, merch, cards, CDs) (00)1 615 895 1120

Collector's World, 10820 Kingston Park #10, Knoxville, TN 37922 Open all week (new, back, CCG, merch, cards, CDs) (00)1 423 675 6830

Collector's World, 4006 Granny White Park, Nashville, TN 37204 (new, back, CCG, merch)(00)1 615 385 8136

Texas

Cliff's Comics, 2205 West Berry Street, Fort Worth, TX 76110. (new, back, cards, merch) (00)1 817 927 7172

Collectible Heroes, 502 West Calton Road #307, Laredo, TX 78041. Mon-Wed 2-7.30; Thurs-Sat 11.30-7.30 (new, back, cards, merch) (00)1 956 791 8428

Dragon's Lair Comics & Fantasy, 616 West 34th Street, Austin, TX 78705 (new, back, games, anime, miniatures, prl) (00)1 512 454 2399

Virginia

Thore Comics, 3514 Oaklawn Boulevard, Hopewell, VA 23860. Mon-Sat 11-7, (new, back, Silver Age, sci-fi, M:TG, cards, vinyl)(00)1 804 458 9561

Trilogy Shop, 700 E Little Creek Road, Norfolk, VA 23518. Mon-Fri 11-7, Sat 10-7, Sun 12-6 (new, back, merch) (00)1 757 587 2540

Wisconsin

Lost World of Wonders, 6713 West Oklahoma Avenue, Milwaukee, WI 53219 (00)1 414 328 4651

Direct Market Retailers:

Comics International's Retail Index is THE international retail reference source for collectors, creators, publishers and journalists. Through it you can reach over 40,000 dedicated readers each issue for only £6 (US $10) a month! Bookable in six-issue blocks, retailers wishing to be included should send US $60 or £36 (UK: please add £6.30 to cover VAT @ 17.5%) plus shop information as detailed on previous page to:

Comics International, 345 Ditchling Road, Brighton BN1 6JJ

Cheques and international money orders should be made payable to Comics International. Alternatively, payment can be made by credit card, fax: 0(11 44) 1273 566 333 or e-mail: comicsinternational@yahoo.co.uk

The letters **(FPI)** after various entries indicates that the company is part of **Forbidden Planet International Ltd**

Retailers: International

Australia

Arcadia Unbound, 267 Forest Road, Hurstville, NSW 2220. Mon-Fri 10.30-7, Sat 10-4, Sun 12-3 (imp, back, manga, merch, CCG) (0061) 2 9585 1489

Books & Bounties/Comics Haven, 157a Charters Towers Road, Townsville, Queensland 4812. Mon-Sat 9-6 (imp, back, gn, merch, RPG, CCG) (0061) 7 4779 2408

Fan Attic, 1st Floor, 91 Elizabeth Street, Brisbane, Queensland 4002. Mon-Sun 9.30-5.30 (toys, Star Wars, sci-fi collectibles) (0061) 7 3221 1420

Kinda Lotsa Comics and Stuff, Shop 4, 503-511 King Street, Newtown, Sydney, NSW. Mon-Sat 10.30-7.30 (back, toys, merch)(0061) 2 9565 1054

Known Space Books, 1st Floor, 108 Gawler Place, Adelaide, SA 5000. Wed-Sat 12-6 (US/UK back) (0061) 8 8223 4304

Phantom Zone, 23 Anderson Street. Chatswood, NSW 2067. Mon-Fri 9-6, Sat-Sun 9-4 (imp, back, merch, RPG) (0061) 2 9411 3709

Phantom Zone, 198 Mann Street, Gosford, NSW 2250. Mon-Fri 9-6, Sat-Sun 9-4. (imp, back, merch, RPG) (0061) 2 43 25 4599

Phantom Zone, 207 George Street, Liverpool, NSW. Mon-Fri 9-6, Sat-Sun 9-4. (imp, back, merch, RPG) (0061) 2 9601 2622

Phantom Zone, 285 Hunter Street, Newcastle, NSW. 2300. Mon-Fri 9-6, Sat-Sun 9-4. (imp, back, merch, RPG) (0061) 2 4929 5717

Phantom Zone, 101a Argyle Street, Parramatta, NSW 2150 Mon-Fri 9-6; Sat-Sun 9-4 (imp, back, books, merch, RPG) (0061) 2 9891 1848

Phantom Zone, 268 Crown Street, Wollongong, NSW. 2500. Mon-Fri 9-6, Sat-Sun 9-4 (imp, back, gn, merch, RPG) (0061) 2 4228 7393

Austria

Comic Treff, Getreidemarkt 2-4, 1010 Vienna. Mon-Fri 10-7, Sat 10-1 (imp, back, gn, CCG) (0043) 11 586 76 27

Belgium

Forbidden Zone, 25 Rue de Tamines, 1060 Brussels. (3 floors; imp, back, merch, US/French, STO, toys) (0032 2) 534 63 67 (fax 538 24 52)

Canada

Connection MD, 1539 Van Horne Avenue, Montreal, Quebec H2V 1L4. Mon-Sat 11-6 (new, merch, back, CCG) (00)1 514 948 2627

Dragon Lady Comics & Paper Nostalgia, 609 College Street, Toronto, Ontario M6G 1B5. (00)1 416 536 7460

Little Shop of Heroes, 160 Wallace Avenue, South Listowel, Ontario N4W 1X9 (00)1 519 291 2281

Silver Snail Comic Shop, 367 Queen Street West, Toronto M5V 2A4. Mon-Wed 10-6; Thurs-Fri 11-8; Sat 10-6; Sun 12-5 (00)1 416 593 0889

France

Album, 67 boulevard St Germain, 75005 Paris. Mon-Sat 10-8; Sun 12-7 (imp, back, gn) (0033) 53 10 00 60

Album, 6 rue Dante, 75005 Paris. Mon-Sat 10-8; Sun 12-7 (imp, back, gn) (0033) 43 54 67 09

Alpha Omega, 25 rue de la Clef, 59800 Lille. Mon 2.30-7.30, Tue-Sat 10.30-12.30/2.30-7.30 (imp, back, French, merch, trading/gaming cards, toys, RPG, Wars/Trek, B5, L5R) (0033) 320 319 375

Astro City, 22 rue Masurel, 59800 Lille. Mon 3-7.30; Tue-Sat 10-12.30, 2-7.30 (imp, manga, cards, merch, kits) (0033) 320 55 1010

Impact Comics, 64 rue Condorcet, 75009 Paris. Mon-Sat 11-7.30 (imp, back, merch, CCG)(0033) 42 80 30 10

L'Antre des Dragons, 56 rue de Loup, 33000 Bordeaux. Mon-Sat 10-1/2-7 (imp, manga, gn, RPG, CCG, merch) (0033) 55 65 17378

Les Nageurs de Sable, 14 rue Courteline, 37058 Tours. Mon-Sat 11-1/2-7 (imp, back, cards, merch) (0033) 2 47 39 52 40

Pulps, 14 bld Morland, 75004 Paris. Mon-Sat 11-7 (imp, back, RPG) (0033) 1 42 72 55 25

Germany

Black Dog Comics, Rodenberg Strasse 9, 10439 Berlin. Mon-Fri 11-6.30, Sat 11-2 (imp, back, gn, t/cards) (0049) 30 4473 6486

Grober Unfug, Zossenerstrasse 32-33, 10961 Berlin. Mon-Sat 11-7 (imp, back, gn, CCG, merch) (0049) 30 6940 1490

Greece

Metropolis Comics, 94 Metropoleos St, 54622 Thessaloniki. Mon-Sat 10.30-3.30/7.30-11.30 (imp, back, gn, RPG, CCG, merch) (0030) 3 193 7775

Solaris, 6 Botasi Str, 10682, Athens. Mon-Sat 9-3.30/5-8.30 (imp, back, gn, merch) (0030) 1 384 1065

Holland

Henk Lie's Comics & Manga Store, Zeeduk 104, 1012BB Amsterdam. Mon-Sat 11-6; Sun 11-9 (imp, cards, merch, CCG) (0031) 20 421 3688

Hungary

Troll Kepregenyta'r, Terez Krt 13, Budapest 1067. Mon-Fri 10-6, Sat 10-1(imp, manga, gn, RPG, CCG, merch) (0036) 1 322 6026

Irish Republic

Forbidden Planet (FPI), 5-6 Crompton Quay, Dublin 2. Mon-Sat 10-6 (Thurs 10-7); Sun 12-5 (imp, back, ind, merch, u/g, UK, gn, STO) (0035) 3167 10688

Sub-City Comics, 2 Exchequer Street, Dublin 2. (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, prl, RPG, CCG, merch) (0035) 3167 71902

Sub-City Comics, Unit 10, Level 1, Corbettcourt Centre, Eyre Square, Galway. (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, prl, RPG, CCG, merch) (0035) 3915 65994

The 3rd Place, Crow Street, Temple Bar, Dublin 2. (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STO, s-p, ind, prl, RPG, CCG, merch) (0035) 3163 36965

Italy

Avalon, via Battisti 9/b, Bologna. Mon 3-7, Tue-Sat 10.30-1/2-7.30 (imp, back, gn, RPG, CCG, merch) (0039) 051 234459

Avalon, via Pedriali 21, Forli. Mon 3-7, Tue-Sat 10-1/2-7 (imp, back, gn, RPG, CCG, merch) (0039) 0543 33523

Avalon, via Settembrini 20, Milan. Mon 3.30-7.30, Tue-Sat 11-7.30 (imp, back, gn, RPG, CCG, merch) (0039) 022 9400410

Avalon, via Foscolo 3, Padova. Mon 3-7, Tue-Sat 10-1/2-7. (imp, back, gn, RPG, CCG, merch)(0039) 049 658290

Avalon, via Bissolati 68, Rome. Mon 3-7, Tue-Sat 10-1/2-7 (imp, back, gn, CCG, cards, merch)

Avalon, via Magenta 0, Torino. Mon 3.30-7, Tue-Sat 10.30-1, 2-7.30 (imp, back, gn, RPG, CCG, merch) (0039) 011 5617252

Forbidden Planet, via Pinerolo 11/15, 00182 Rome (imp, back, gn) (0039) 06 70305702

Il Marchio Giallo, via Deghi Scipioni 116, Rome. Tue-Sat 10.30-1/2-7.30 (imp, back, merch, kits) (0039) 06 361 40 60

La Borsa del Fumetto, via Lecco 16, 20124 Milano. (imp, back, European and RPG, CCG) (0039) 11 5617252

Malaysia

The Mind Shop, Starhill Centre, Jalang Bukit Bintag, Kuala Lumpur. Mon-Sat 11-10 (imp, CCG, RPG, merch) (00603) 241 8871

The Mind Shop, S 58 Bandar Utama, Petaling Jaya. Mon-Sat 11-10 (imp, CCG, RPG, merch) (00603) 719 8246

The Mind Shop, Jin SS21/39, Petaling Jaya. Mon-Sat 11-10 (imp, CCG, RPG, merch) (00603) 717 6602

New Zealand

Heroes For Sale, Level 2, 62 Queen St, Auckland. Mon-Sat 10-7 (imp, back, s-p, merch, ind, u/g)(0064) 9 307 0682

Whitcoulls Corner Branch, 210 Queen Street, Private Bag 92098, Auckland. (imp, back, gn, tpbk, s-p, merch, ind, u/g) (0064) 9 356 5400 (fax: 9 356 5408)

Portugal

BdMania, Rua das Flores 67-71 R/C, 1200 Lisboa. Mon-Sat 11-7.30 (imp, back, CCG, merch) (00351) 21 346 1207

Interzona, Centro Comercial Brasilia, Loja 203, Rua Luis Veaga Lertao 98-120, 6050 Porto. Mon-Sat 11-11 (imp, back, gn, CCG, merch) (00351) 22 609 1460

Mundo Fantasma, Centro Comercial Brasilia, Rua Luis Veiga Leitao, 98/120, 1 Andar-Loja 203, 4050-399 Porto. Mon-Sat 11-11 (US imp, back, gn, CCG, merch) (00351) 22 609 1460

South Africa

Euroniag, Shop 79A, East Rand Mall, Boksburg, Johannesburg. Mon-Sun 9-10 (imp, back, gn, CCG, merch) (0027) 11 896 3773

Zed Bree's Comic Universe, Mediterr-anean Building, 24 Tenth Ave, Edenvale 1610 Gauteng. 9.30-6 (imp, merch, gn, CCG) 002711 453 4215 (fax 453 4459)

Spain

Gigamesh, RDA San Pedro 53, 08010 Barcelona. Mon-Sat 10-1.30/4.30-8 (imp, gn, RPG, CCG, merch) (0034) 3 246 6359

Sweden

Comics Heaven, Stora Nygatan 23, 11127 Stockholm. Mon-Sat 10-6.30 (imp, back, gn, merch)(0046) 8 202516

Switzerland

Analph Comicladen Strassburgstr, 10 PO Box 1030, 8004 Zürich. (0041) 1 2419695 fax 1 2403442

The letters **(FPI)** after entries indicate that the company is part of **Forbidden Planet International Ltd**

International Festivals

A listing of the world's major comics festivals and conventions. For further information, call the organisers on the phone, fax or e-mail numbers provided. To view updates, contact them on their websites. Organisers' estimates of their previous year's attendance is given in brackets.

November 6-7: England

COMIC EXPO, Ramada Plaza Hotel, Bristol. Organisers: Area 51 & Comics International. 01179 244655. E-mail: comicexpo@fsmail.net. Website: http://comicexpo.mysite.wanadoo-members.co.uk

November 13-14: Scotland

MEMORABILIA '04, The SECC, Glasgow. Organisers: Made in Heaven, 1 Star Street, Moffat, Dumfriesshire DG10 9DR. 01683 220787. www.memorabilia.co.uk

November 27-28: England

MEMORABILIA '04, NEC, Birmingham. Organisers: Made in Heaven, 1 Star Street, Moffat, Dumfriesshire DG10 9DR. 01683 220787. www.memorabilia.co.uk

January 27-30: France

ANGOULEME BD. Organisers: Festival International de la Bande Dessinee, 2 Place d l'Hotel de Ville, 16000 Angouleme, France. 0033 05 45 97 86 50. E-mail: b.monchart@labd.com. www.bdangouleme.com

February 25-27: United States

MEGACON 2005, Orange County Convention Centre, Orlando, Florida. Organisers MegaCon, PO Box 1097, Safety Harbor, FL 34695, USA. 001 727 796 5725. www.megaconvention.com

April: England

MEMORABILIA '05, NEC, Birmingham. Organisers: Made in Heaven, 1 Star Street, Moffat, Dumfriesshire DG10 9DR. 01683 220787. www.memorabilia.co.uk Date: TBA

May 13-15: England

COMIC EXPO 2, British Empire and Commonwealth Exhibition Hall and Ramada Plaza Hotel, Bristol. Organisers: Area 51 & Comics International. 01179 244655. E-mail: comicexpo@fsmail.net. Website: http://comicexpo.mysite.wanadoo-members.co.uk

May: Spain

THE 22ND BARCELONA INTERNATIONAL COMIC FESTIVAL. (2003 est: 85,000). Organisers: Ficomic, Palau, 4 Baixos, 08002 Barcelona, Spain. 0034 93 301 23 69. www.ficomic.com Date: TBA

May: Finland

ARCTIC COMICS FESTIVAL, KEMI. Organisers: The Arctic Comics Centre, Rautatienkatu 13 B, FIN-90100 Oulu, Finland. 00358 400 514 540. www.kemi.fi/sarjis Date: TBA

June: Switzerland

FESTIVAL INTERNATIONAL DE LA BANDE DESSINEE DE SIERRE. Organisers: Festival BD Sierre, CP 200, CH-3960 Sierre, Switzerland. 0041 27 455 90 43 fax: 0041 27 455 91 01. www.bdsierre.ch Date: TBA

July 14-17: United States

COMIC-CON INTERNATIONAL '05, San Diego, California. Organisers: Comic-Con International, PO Box 128458, San Diego, CA 92112-8458. 001 619 491 2475. www.comic-con.org

August 5-7: United States

WIZARD WORLD CHICAGO CON 2005. Organisers: Wizard World Chicago, 151 Wells Avenue, Congers, NY 10920-2064. 001 608 226 0200. www.wizarduniverse.com

August: England

MEMORABILIA '05, NEC, Birmingham. Organisers: Made in Heaven, 1 Star Street, Moffat, Dumfriesshire DG10 9DR. 01683 220787. www.memorabilia.co.uk Date: TBA

Comics Publishers

North America

Unlike Europe, North American publishers invariably favour indie status to that of being labelled small press. This results in there being hundreds of comics publishers.

While circulations vary immensly, the following are the continent's major comicbook producers with titles printing between 5,000 and 150,000 copies. Contact telephone numbers are given where readily available. Website details can be found on the first page of the directory section.

AARDVARK-VANAHEIM, PO Box 1674 Station C, Kitchener, Ontario, Canada N2G 4R2 (Cerebus)

ABSTRACT STUDIOS, PO Box 271487, Houston, TX 77277-1487 (Strangers in Paradise)

AC COMICS, PO Box 521216, Longwood, FL 32752-1216 (adventure titles, Golden Age superhero and western reprints)

ACCLAIM COMICS, 1 Acclaim Plaza, Glen Cove, NY 11542 (game tie-in adventure, Valiant superhero imprint. dormant) (00)1 516 656 5000

AiT/PLANET LAR, 2034 47th Avenue, San Francisco, CA 94116 (graphic novels) (00)1 415 504 7516

ALTERNATIVE COMICS, 503 North West 37th Ave, Gainesville, FL 32609-2204 (alternative titles and graphic novels) (00)1 352 373 6336

AMERICAN MEDIA CONSUMER ENTERTAINMENT, INC, 600 East Coast Avenue, Lantana, Florida 33464 (Cracked) (00)1 561 586 1111

ANTARCTIC PRESS, 7272 Wurzbach Parkway , Suite 204, San Antonio, Texas TX 78240 (adventure and US manga titles)

ARCHIE COMIC PUBLICATIONS, 325 Fayette Avenue, Mamaroneck, NY 10543 (humour titles) (00)1 914 381 5155

AVATAR PRESS, 9 Triumph Drive, Urbana, IL 61802 (horror and fantasy titles) (00)1 217 384 2216

AWESOME ENTERTAINMENT, 9744 Wilshire Boulevard, Suite 402, Beverly Hills, Los Angeles, CA 90212 (adventure titles; dormant)

BONGO ENTERTAINMENT, 1440 South Sepulveda Boulevard, 3rd Floor, Los Angeles, CA 90025 (The Simpsons and Futurama and related humour titles) (00)1 310 966 6168

CALIBER COMICS, 225 North Sheldon Road, Plymouth, MI 48170 (black and white adventure titles) (00)1 734 462 0457

CARTOON BOOKS, PO Box 16973, Columbus, OH43216 (Bone and related titles)

CROSSGEN ENTERTAINMENT, INC, 4023 Tampa Road, Suite 2400, Oldsmar, FL 34677 (fantasy and adventure titles) (00)1 813 891 1702

CRUSADE FINE ARTS LTD, PO Box 845, Bayport, NY 11705 (fantasy and adventure) (00)1 631 472 2866

DARK HORSE COMICS, 10956 South East Main Street, Milwaukie, OR 97222 (adventure, licensed, US and Japanese manga) (00)1 503 652 8815

DC COMICS, 1700 Broadway, NY 10019 (adventure and humour titles, MAD, Vertigo and Paradox Press imprints) (00)1 212 636 5400

DRAWN & QUARTERLY, PO Box 48056, Montreal, Quebec, H2V 4SB, Canada (black and white biog)

DREAMWAVE PRODUCTIONS, 11 Allstate Parkway, Suite 200, Markham, Ontario L3R 9T8, Canada (adventure titles)

DYNAMIC FORCES, 155 Ninth Avenue, Suite E, Runnemede, NJ 08078 (variant editions and limited edition merchandise) (00)1 856 312 1040

FANTAGRAPHICS BOOKS, 7563 Lake City Way North East, Seattle, Washington 98115 (adventure, biographical and Eros adult titles) (00)1 206 524 1967

HARRIS COMICS, 1115 Broadway, 8th Floor, NY 10010 (Vampirella, fantasy and horror titles) (00)1 212 807 7100

HEAVY METAL, 100 North Village Road, Suite 12, Rockville Center, NY 11570 (adult fantasy magazines and spin-off editions)

HUMANOIDS PUBLISHING, PO Box 931658, Hollywood, California CA 90093 (US-European editions)

IMAGE COMICS, 1071 North Batavia Street, Suite A, Orange, CA 92867 (adventure titles) (00)1 714 2880200

MARVEL ENTERTAINMENT GROUP, 10th Floor, East 40th Street, New York, NY 10016 (adventure, humour and licensed titles) (00)1 212 5764000

NBM PUBLICATIONS, 185 Madison Avenue, Suite 1504, New York, NY 10016 (adult fantasy graphic novels and magazines)

ONI PRESS, 6336 South East Milwaukie Avenue, PMB 30, Portland, OR 97202 (adventure titles)

RADIO COMIX, 11765 West Avenue, PMB #117, San Antonio, TX 78216 (anthropomorphic manga) (00)1 210 3487195

SIRIUS ENTERTAINMENT, INC, PO Box 834, Stanhope, NJ 07802 (adult titles)

SLAVE LABOR GRAPHICS PUBLISHING, 577 South Market Street, San Jose, CA 95113 (black and white fantasy titles) (00)1 9718929

TOP SHELF PRODUCTIONS, PO Box 1282, Marietta, GA 30061-1282 (alternative and biographical titles) (00)1 770 4276395

TWOMORROWS PUBLISHING, 10407 Bedfordtown Drive, Raleigh, NC 27614 (comics feature and history magazines and books) tel: (00)1 919 449 0344 fax: (00) 1 919 449 0327

VIZ COMMUNICATIONS, PO Box 77010, San Francisco, CA 94107 (English translated manga titles)

WaRP GRAPHICS, 2600 South Road, Suite 44/242, Poughkeepsie, NY 12601 (Elfquest and spin-off titles)

United Kingdom

The following are major UK comics and graphic novel publishers. If calling from outside of the UK, you should drop the first 0 and replace with: 01144 (USA); 0044 (mainland Europe and Eire); 001144 (Australasia).

AP COMICS, Suite 3, 7 French Row, St Albans, Herts AL3 5DU (adventure titles)

COM.X, The Dickens Inn, Kirk Street, London WC1N 2DG (adventure titles) 020 7831 7777

DC THOMSON, 2 Albert Square, Dundee DD1 9QJ (humour and adventure titles, pocket books and annuals)

DENNIS PUBLISHING LTD, 30 Cleveland Street, London W1T 4JD (humour and adventure titles, pocket books and annuals) 020 7907 6000

EGMONT MAGAZINES LTD, Fourth Floor, 184-192 Drummond Street, London NW1 3HP (humour, licensed and pre-school titles) 020 7380 6430

HAMLYN BOOKS, 2-4 Heron Quays, London E14 4JB (graphic novels) 020 7531 8400

JOHN BROWN CITRUS PUBLISHING, The New Boathouse, 136-142 Bramley Road, London W10 6SR (albums) 020 7565 3000

KNOCKABOUT COMICS, 10 Acklam Road, London W10 5QZ (humour titles and underground comix and graphic novels) 020 8969 2945

PANINI COMICS (UK), Panini House, Coach and Horses Passage, The Pantiles, Tunbridge Wells, Kent TN2 5UJ (humour and adventure comics, Marvel licensed titles) 01892 500100

PULP THEATRE ENTERTAINMENT, Mermaid Court, 1 Mermaid House, London Bridge, London SE1 1HR (adventure titles) 020 7403 0378

REBELLION DEVELOPMENTS LTD, The Studio, Brewer Street, Oxford OX1 1QN (Judge Dredd The Megazine and 2000 AD) 01865 792201

THE REDAN COMPANY, Canon Court East, Abbey Lawn, Shrewsbury SY2 5DE (pre-school humour and licenced titles) 01743 364433

SAVOY BOOKS, 446 Wilmslow Road, Withington, Manchester M20 3BW (adult comics magazines, books and graphic novels) 0161 445 5771

TITAN ENTERTAINMENT GROUP LTD, Titan House, 144 Southwark Street, London SE1 0UP (licensed graphic novels, books, magazines and comics) 020 7620 0200

France

The following are the country's major comics and album publishers. If phoning from the USA, the country code of 0033 becomes 011 33

ALBIN MICHEL, 22 rue Huyghens, 75014 Paris (albums) (0033) 1 42 79 10 00

CASTERMAN, 36 rue du Chemin Vert, 75011, Paris (albums and manga titles)

DARGAUD, 15-27 rue Moussorgski, 75018 Paris (albums and manga titles) tel: (0033) 1 53 26 32 32 fax: (0033) 1 53 26 32 00

DELCOURT, 54 rue d'Hauteville, 75010 Paris (albums and comics) tel: (0033) 1 56 03 92 20 fax: (0033) 1 56 03 92 30

FLUIDE GLACIAL, 33 avenue du Main, BP 187, 75755 Paris (comics and albums) (0033) 1 43 20 23 96

GLENAT, 31-33 rue Ernest Renan, 92130 Issy-Les-Moulineaux (albums and manga titles) tel: (0033) 1 41 46 11 41 fax: (0033) 1 41 46 11 13

J'AI LU, 84 rue de Grenelle, 75007 Paris (licenced Japanese manga titles) (0033) 1 44 39 34 70

LES HUMANOIDES ASSOCIES, 5 Passage Piver, 75011 Paris (albums) tel: (0033) 1 49 29 88 88 fax: (0033) 1 49 29 88 89

SEMIC FRANCE, 44316 Nantes Cedex 03 (licenced comics and albums) (0033) 2 51 86 14 14

Italy

The following are the country's major comics and album publishers. If phoning from the USA, the country code of 0039 becomes 011 39

SERGIO BONELLI EDITORE, via Buonarroti 38, 20145 Milano (black and white comics)

CULT COMICS, viale Emilio Po' 380, 41100 Modena (Image and Dark Horse licensed titles)

MAGIC PRESS, Zona industriale via Ragusa 18, 00040 Pavona, Roma (Vertigo and WildStorm licensed titles) (0039) 06 93020361

STAR COMICS, strada Selvette 1bis/1 Bosco (PG) (comics and black and white manga titles)

ASTORINA S.R.I., via Boccaccio 32, 20123 Milano (Diabolik original and reprint black and white)

KING COMICS, via Pinerolo 3, 00182 Roma (comics)

Spain

The following are the country's comics and album publishers. If phoning from the USA, the country code of 0034 becomes 011 34

NORMA EDITORAL, Fluvià 89, 08019 Barcelona (licensed DC and Dark Horse comics and albums) 0034 93 303 68 20

EDITORIAL PLANETA-DE AGOSTINI, SA, Aribau 185, 08021 Barcelona (licensed Dark Horse comics and albums)

TOUTAIN EDITOR, SA, Diagonal 325, E-08009 Barcelona (licensed Marvel, Dark Horse, Chaos!, Image and manga comics and albums) 0034 93 344 06 00

EDICIONES LA CÚPULA, Plaza de las Beatas 3, E-08003 Barcelona (adult comics and albums) 0034 32 682 8 05

Mail Order Specialists

Key to abbreviations used:

w/s	= wholesale available	CoBRA	= Comic Book Retailers' mail order protection scheme
dis	= bulk discount terms		
cat	= phone/write for catalogue	cc	= major credit cards accepted
s-cat	= sae for catalogue		
wants	= wants lists accepted	sae	= send stamped, addressed envelope with enquiry
s-wants	= sae with wants lists		

When telephoning from outside the UK, drop the first 0 and replace with: 01144 (USA); 0044 (mainland Europe & Eire); 001144 (Australasia).

Golden Age

Generally acknowledged as being published between 1938 and 1945, the first age of superhero comics, but herein designated to cover all pre-Silver Age American comics.

Comic Biz, PO Box 7041, London N12 9NF (wants, CoBRA, cc, cat) 020 8446 3464

Comic Book Postal Auctions Ltd, 40-42 Osnaburgh Street, London NW1 3ND (cat) 020 7424 0007

Goldust Comics, 67 St John's Wood High St, London NW8 7NL (high grade, cat, wants, cc) 020 8341 5558

Mighty World of Comicana, 237 Shaftesbury Avenue, London WC2 (dis, cat, CoBRA, cc) 020 7836 5630

Quality Comics, 345 Ditchling Rd, Brighton BN1 6JJ (CoBRA, cc)

Silver Acre Comics, PO Box 114, Chester CH4 8WQ (s-wants, cc) 01244 680 048 (fax: 680686)

Silver Age

Accepted as starting in 1955 with DC's superhero rebirth through ***Detective Comics*** *#225 (introducing the Martian Manhunter) and* ***Showcase*** *#4 (introducing the Barry Allen Flash). Herein covering titles up to late 1960s.*

NEW **Colmore Comics & Collectables**, PO Box 11240, Birmingham B37 7ZT (cat, cc, high grade, CGC) 0121 767 1803 fax: 0121 767 1910

Comic Biz, PO Box 7041, London N12 9NF (wants, CoBRA, cc, cat) 020 8446 3464

Comic Book Postal Auctions Ltd, 40-42 Osnaburgh Street, London NW1 3ND (cat) 020 7424 0007

East Coast Comics UK, 28 Acton Road, Lowestoft, Suffolk NR33 7LG (high grade, s-want, cc, sae) 01502 578385 (day) 560727 (eve)

Goldust Comics, 67 St John's Wood High St, London NW8 7NL (high grade, cat, wants, cc) 020 8341 5558

Mighty World of Comicana, 237 Shaftesbury Avenue, London WC2 (dis, cat, CoBRA, cc) 020 7836 5630

Quality Comics, 345 Ditchling Rd, Brighton BN1 6JJ (CoBRA, cc)

Quicksilver Comics, PO Box 73, Ossett WF5 0YQ (s-cat, dis, wants, cc, CoBRA) 01924 270500 (fax: 270919)

Silver Acre Comics, PO Box 114, Chester CH4 8WQ (s-wants, cc) 01244 680 048 (fax 680686)

Post-Silver Age

Comics from 1970 to date: From Bronze Age-Marvel Age-Lead Age up to Platinum Age-Gimmick Age-Image Age. Historians will doubtless eventually decide on a name.

Mighty World of Comicana, 237 Shaftesbury Avenue, London WC2 (dis, cat, CoBRA, cc) 020 7836 5630

Planet Warehouse (FPI) *formerly Comics Warehouse* PO Box 600, 8 Galliford Road, Maldon, Essex CM9 7XD (w/s, cat, cc, CoBRA) 01621 877244

Quality Comics, 345 Ditchling Rd, Brighton BN1 6JJ (CoBRA, cc)

Tarpaulin Books and Comics, 5 Oak Close, Thetford, Norfolk IP24 3EZ (wants, s-cat) 01842 820139

Hot Comics

Current or key titles, first issues or first appearances of major characters. Investment titles for speculators willing to gamble.

A Place in Space, 101 Church Street, Croydon, Surrey CR0 1RN (wants, cc, dis) 020 8686 2400

Comix-shop. co.uk, 7a High Street, Maidenhead, Berkshire SL6 1JN (wants, cat, cc) 01628 777998

Advance Imports

US comics are not generally available in UK newsagents, except for some sea-freight shipped low-cover price DCs and Marvels, and can only be found through specialists in the rest of the world. The following companies offer air-shipped copies from all of the major US publishers.

Ace Comics, 63/64 High Street, Colchester, Essex (wants, cat, CoBRA, cc) 01206 561912

Avalon Comics, 143 Lavender Hill, London SW11 5QJ (cc, CoBRA) 020 7924 3609

Comix-shop.co.uk, 7a High Street, Maidenhead, Berkshire SL6 1JN (wants, cat, cc) 01628 777998

86th Floor Comics & Cards, 6 Shipley Common Lane, Ilkeston, Derbyshire DE7 8TR (dis, cat, cc) 0115 9443009

Forbidden Planet Mega-store, 179 Shaftesbury Avenue, London WC2H 8JR (s-cat cc) 020 7420 3666

Gosh! Strips by Mail, 39 Great Russell Street, London WC1B 3PH 020 7636 1011

Planet Warehouse (FPI) *formerly Comics Warehouse*, PO Box 600, 8 Galliford Road, Maldon, Essex CM9 7XD (w/s, cat, cc, CoBRA) 01621 877244

Red Hot Comics, The Warehouse Block D Unit 8, Glenwood Business Park, Glenwood Place, Glasgow G45 9UH (CoBRA, w/s, dis, wants, cc) tel/fax: 0141 630 0049

Limited Editions

Many high-profile miniseries and one-shots are also available in limited, numbered and often autographed editions (s&n). New titles, to acquire copyright, can also appear in small print-run "ashcan" editions (ash).

Comic Biz, PO Box 7041, London N12 9NF (CoBRA, cc, ash, s&n, cat) 020 8446 3464

Trading Cards

Several mail order dealers carry a range of non-sports cards and related peripherals (files, folders, sleeves).

Beyond Comics, 76 Harlescott Road, Nunhead, London SE15 3BZ (s-cat, s-wants, sae, CoBRA) tel/fax: 020 7564 4213

John McDonald: Non-Sport Trading Cards, 20 Alder Grove, Coatbridge, Lanarkshire ML5 3PT (cat, wants) tel/fax: 01236 433358

Old British Titles

The popularity of old British comics continues to increase as more dealers expand into this area. The following specialise in such titles.

The Book Palace, Jubilee House, Bedwardine Road, Crystal Palace, London SE19 3AP 020 8768 0022

Comic Biz, PO Box 7041, London N12 9NF (wants, CoBRA, cc, cat) 020 8446 3464

Comic Book Postal Auctions Ltd, 40-42 Osnaburgh Street, London NW1 3ND (cat) 020 7424 0007

Weird Fantasy, 19 Decoy Road, Ormesby, Great Yarmouth, Norfolk NR29 3LG (s-cat, s-wants, annuals specialist)

Merchandise

Comics, film and TV-related t-shirts, posters, video games, badges, toys, action figures, etc.

Off World: The Sci-Fi Store, 142 Market Halls, Arndale Centre, Luton, Beds LU1 2TP (specialists in Star Trek, Star Wars and sci-fi collectables) 01582 736256

Sci-Fi Merchandise Direct (FPI) and **Gear for Games (FPI)** Maldon, Essex CM9 4XD (cat) 01621 877222

Original Art

With artists having their originals returned by publishers, an increasing number of pages are now being made available for collectors.

The Book Palace, Jubilee House, Bedwardine Road, Crystal Palace, London SE19 3AP 020 8768 0022

Comic Book Postal Auctions Ltd, 40-42 Osnaburgh Street, London NW1 3ND (cat) 020 7424 0007

Silver Acre Comics, PO Box 114, Chester CH4 8WQ (s-wants, cc) 01244 680 048 (fax: 680686)

Peripherals

Acid-free protection for comics. Backing boards, protective bags, storage boxes, etc.

The Book Palace, Jubilee House, Bedwardine Road, Crystal Palace, London SE19 3AP 020 8768 0022

Just Comics, 65 Station Road, Warboys, Huntingdon, Cambs PE28 2TH (w/s only, CollectorLine™ distributor) 01487 824895 01487 824896

Planet Warehouse (FPI) *formerly Comics Warehouse*, PO Box 600, 8 Galliford Road, Maldon, Essex CM9 7XD (w/s, cat, cc, CoBRA) 01621 877244

General Fantasy

As well as comics old and new, some suppliers also provide catalogues of multi-media fantasy, covering TV, film, trading cards and toys.

Forbidden Planet Mail Order, 144 Southwark Street, London SE1 0UP (cat) 020 7803 1900 (fax: 7803 1901)

Sci-Fi Merchandise Direct (FPI) and **Gear for Games (FPI)** Maldon, Essex CM9 4XD (cat) 01621 877222

Manga Titles

English language translations of Japanese comics and US titles drawn in the Japanese style.

United Publications, 85 Croydon Road, Keston, Kent BR2 8HU (ind, back, cat, wants, cc) 020 8325 9507

Alternative & Biographical

The following carry an extensive range of biographical and slice-of-life comicbooks and graphic novels (Fantagraphics, Maus, Crumb, Pekar...)

Gosh! Strips by Mail, 39 Great Russell Street, London WC1B 3PH (wants) 020 7636 1011

Knockabout Comics, 10 Acklam Road, London W10 5QZ (w/s, s-cat, cc) 020 8969 2945 (fax: 8968 7614)

Page 45, 9 Market Street, Nottingham NG1 6HY 0115 9508045

Comics Auctions

Accepting lots from the general public, comics auctions provide an alternative way for collectors to sell their valuable comics. The following accept items for sale, as well as providing regular catalogues for mail order bids.

Comic Book Postal Auctions Ltd, 40-42 Osnaburgh Street, London NW1 3ND (cat) 020 7424 0007

Distributors

Anybody considering opening a comics shop or becoming a mail order dealer can obtain further information about the supply of titles from the following who bulk air import US and European comics and related items on a weekly basis.

The Book Palace, Jubilee House, Bedwardine Road, Crystal Palace, London SE19 3AP (graphic novels, art books, comics, remainders, film and TV, popular culture) 020 8768 0022

Diamond Comic Distributors, 2nd Floor, Warton House, 150 High Street, London E15 2NP (US and European comics, cards and related items) 020 8536 5730 (fax: 8536 5736)

Red Route Distribution, Unit 24, 10 Acklam Road, London W10 5QZ (US & European comics/ graphic novels, back-list specialists) 020 8960 5855

Turnaround Publisher Services, Unit 3, Olympia Trading Estate, Coburg Road, Wood Green, London N22 6TZ (graphic novels, art books, film and TV, popular culture) 020 8829 3000

Mail Order Dealers:

CI's Mail Order Index is the industry's most cost-effective and highly-targeted way to reach a huge dedicated audience in excess of 40,000 readers every month. It costs only £4 ($6 US) per entry per issue to appear and is bookable in advance as a six-issue series. Send pre-payment of £24/$36 (plus £4.20 VAT for UK advertisers) per category with your details to:

Comics International, 345 Ditchling Road, Brighton BN1 6JJ

Cheques and international money orders should be made payable to Comics International. Alternatively, payment can be made by credit card, fax: 0(11 44) 1273 566 333 or e-mail: comicsinternational@yahoo.co.uk

The letters **(FPI)** after entries indicates that the company is part of **Forbidden Planet International Ltd**

Classified

Advertising terms and conditions

Whether for publication or not, all advertisements must be accompanied by full name, home address and daytime phone number of advertiser.

• All private classified Wants or Announcements ads (comics or card related items only) are free of charge. Maximum 50 words, they will be printed at the publisher's discretion when space permits. *(Only one advertisement can be submitted per letter/per issue so everybody gets a chance to fit in!)*

• FOR SALE ads (and dealer wants/announcements) are charged:
(i) General announcements: Stating no issue numbers, prices or titles. Per 50 words (or part thereof) ..... £5.00 ($7.50 US)
(ii) List ads: Including specific titles, issues and/or prices. Minimum charge, per 100 words (or part thereof) ..... £10.00 ($15.00 US)

Full payment, to Comics International, must accompany wordage.

CI Classified, 345 Ditchling Road, Brighton BN1 6JJ

For Sale

Comicbook clearout. Almost 10,000 comics in lots of 10 kilograms (approx 160 comics). From £30 per lot. Over 10 types of lot: Marvel, DC, indies, mixed, Dark Horse, Eclipse, First, Malibu, Valiant, Vertigo, teams, superhero, mutant, Superman, Batman, annuals, plus many others. For full details call 01902 335027 after 4pm or send an sae to 9 Highlands Road, Wolverhampton WV3 8AH.

For sale: almost every US Marvel comic from 1963 to 1979. Brand new 36-page catalogue now available (ref: Catalogue No. 1). Many new additions, including superheroes, westerns, romance, war, ND issues, reprint titles, magazines and paperbacks! For sale or will trade for UK or US comics. In preparation: Catalogue No. 2 will be published soon, featuring a huge collection of Warren, Skywald and similar horror magazines, plus titles from Charlton, DC, 1980s Marvels, Pacific Comics, UK Marvel and miscellaneous comics, fanzines, etc. Please send a separate sae for each catalogue you require to Peter M. Jaques, 21 The Oaklands, Droitwich WR9 8AD.

I am selling my collection - 5,000 books from the 1960s onwards. DC, Marvel, indies, **2000AD**, graphic novels, trades, etc. I don't have time to make a list so please contact me with your wants and interests. If I have them I'll sell them to you cheap! Contact Sumyra on 0161 928 9684 or e-mail summerfdeen@hotmail.com.

For sale: high-grade items from private collection. DC comics from the 1960s to the 1980s, including 80- and 100-page issues, digest and treasuries. Also hardback collections, comics-related books and magazines, archives, **Marvel Masterworks**, and trade paperbacks. Send an sae for revised list to Michael Connolly, 103 Ballylenaghan Heights, Belfast BT8 6WJ (mail only).

Wanted

Advertisers are reminded that Wanted ads must be no longer than 50 words (including address), and only single insertion private advertisements can be published free of charge.

Wanted: **TV Comic** weeklies and holiday specials from the 1960s and 1970s; **Countdown** weeklies; **Batman** and **Superboy** annuals from the 1950s and 1960s; Miller Comics horror and sci-fi titles; **Scion** and **Badger** sci-fi paperbacks (1950s and 1960s); Blondie (Debbie Harry) Madonna and Kylie Minogue annuals; **The Lone Ranger** (Dell/Gold Key); **The Beatles - Yellow Submarine** (Gold Key). John Balfour, Westerstraat 67-3, Amsterdam, Holland 1015 LW.

Wanted in fine condition: Golden Age Batman pewter statue (1997); **Desperate Dan Book 1979**. Wanted in any condition: **Comics Scene** 55; **Amazing Heroes** 99, 191 (please offer other issues with Batman, Superman or Spirit articles); **The Comics Journal** 46, 53 and 73; **Best of DC Digest** 31, 60, 63, 66 and 71. Details and prices to Michael Connolly, 103 Ballylenaghan Heights, Belfast BT8 6WJ.

Thousands of gaming cards in exchange for your read comics. ***The Crow***, ***Dr Who***, ***Magic The Gathering Revised***, ***Star Trek: The Next Generation*** and ***Star Wars Premier***. Rares, uncommon and common cards at an exchange rate of 30 cards (mixed) per comic. Contact Anthony, 20 Grove Road, Hoylake, Wirral CH47 2DT. Tel: 0151 632 4640

Wanted: **Picture Library** comics, **Pearson Library**, **Battleground**, **Attack**, **Conflict**, **Combat Library**. Call Jim on 020 8330 3788 after 7pm.

Announcements

Fanzine and small press titles must not be offered for sale before being printed. To verify publication, a sample copy must be sent in along with the advertising copy (50 words max). Single bookings only, so everybody gets a chance!

Fun Stuff 1 is a 16-page A5 free humour title just begging to be taken home. The first 10 copies to be requested from my e-mail (funstuff@meanwhile.tv) will be posted absolutely free. Alternatively, send 1 Euro/£1 for p&p to James Newell, Meanwhile.tv, 5 O'Donohues Terrace, WoodQuay, Galway, Ireland.

Planet of the Apes fanzine **Simian Scrolls 9 – The Comics Special**! Introduction by Roy Thomas and interviews with John Bolton and Herb Trimpe, and many others. £3 (including p&p) from John Roche, Mediation House, 74 Stockwell Road, Pembroke Dock, Pembrokeshire SA72 6TQ.

Travel back in time as **Comics Retrospective Winter Special** takes a look back at 25 years of **Dr Who Magazine**. 44 pages of Daleks and Dave Gibbons, just £1.50. Plus **Comics Retrospective** 10, an Avengers Files special is also available, at £1.40. Both available from Tony Ingram, 3 Lower Harlings, Shotley Gate, Ipswich, Suffolk IP9 1QE.

Parataxis 3! Re-presenting part three of Bionic Comics' **Parataxis**! The truth behind the tragic events in that field near Oxford is revealed. Plus The National Union of Superheroes face the Were-Beast of the Tesda Mart! Send two first class stamps to Peter, 94 Tippet Rise, Reading RG2 0DZ.

Sgt Mike Battle: The Greatest American Hero! #5½ is a free 12-page comic that preludes the events of **Sgt Mike Battle: The Greatest American Hero!** #6, which sees the return of the 1980s animal-themed terrorist group PANDA. For your copy send an sae to Graham Pearce, c/o 42 Talbot Road, Penwortham, Preston, Lancashire PR1 9QX. Or visit www.sgtmikebattle.com.

Artist wanted to collaborate with writer on professional comics strip to send to major publishers. Send photocopied art samples to J.A. Short, 20 Grants Avenue, Bournemouth BH1 4NR.

Cartoonist/comics artist seeking work/collaboration. Most things considered. Samples available on request. Martin Street, 30 Farmhouse Road, Short Heath, Willenhall WV12 4AU.

Palaeolithic: interested in the Ice Age? Artist wanted to draw a 20-page strip with a **Clan of the Cave Bear** feel to it. Busty babes versus dinosaurs this isn't! For more information contact Amanda Kear, Flat 11, Beaufort Court, 1 Neaufort Street (off Stapleton Road), Easton, Bristol BS5 0SQ.

Varicose Brain version 1 only £2. Nope, I didn't think you'd be interested... so let's try bribery! Free comic to the first 20 buyers! No jive turkey!? **Thor** 183 fn, **Thor vs Doc Doom**, **Daredevil: Yellow** 1-6, **Dracula Lives** 7, **Daredevil Marvel Must Haves** 41-43 and more! Don't feel derrrrty! You get a free comic, I win a bet! Laird Poland, 11 Kilndale Terrace, Kirkcudbright DG6 4BX.

Stories from the **Haunted Hospital** 1 (limited and numbered). Macabre! What's happening? Is it dead? Five stories/16 A5 pages. Send two first class stamps to Lee Hardcastle, 43 Christopher Road, Woodhouse, Leeds LS6 2JX. Or e-mail haunted_hospital@hotmail.com.

Original comicbook art. Always wished you could afford the prices? Now you can. Stunning images of your favourite characters or from your own designs. Example art available on request. Call 07833 111549 for details.

Wanted for non-profit fanzine: pencillers and inkers. I have scripts and character designs waiting for the right candidates. Please forward your six-page samples (panel work as well as pin-ups, please) to Christopher Herbert, 9 Stretton Road, Leicester.

Inker wanted to work on humour strip for submission to US syndicates. Please send samples (copies not originals) to Captain Wonder Cartoons, 31 Dalboyne Pk, Lisburn, Co Antrim, BT28 3BU or e-mail captainwondercartoons@hotmail.com.

Comic Societies

Join The Eagle Society, dedicated to the memory of Britain's National Strip Cartoon Weekly – The Eagle 1950-1969. For just £18 per year (cheques to The Eagle Society) members receive our quarterly journal **Eagle Times**, as well as the chance to attend social gatherings and meet original Eagle contributors. Write to: Keith Howard, 25a Station Road, Harrow, Middlesex HA1 2UA. E-mail: rsheaf@npg.org.uk

The Comics Creators Guild for industry veterans and aspiring professionals, the largest comics organisation in Europe. Monthly meetings, newsletter, exclusive publications, free legal advice, special discounts and more. For further info contact: Comics Creators Guild, 22 St James Mansions, West End Lane, West Hampstead, London NW6 2AA. www.comicscreators.org.uk

BUY OR SELL OR EVEN TRADE

It's been tried and tested for over 10 years and it's still going strong...

Comics International's *Classified* section has turned more than one £5 "For Sale" advertiser into a big-time full page dealer.

One of the first-read sections of the magazine for both dealers and fans, *Classified* offers you the opportunity to add a part time job to boost your finances.

Most comic fans have unwanted titles taking up valuable space...

... A loft which is in need of clearing.

... A spare room which is no longer spare.

... A garage which is pining for a car.

Classified can help you not only clear that space, but earn you money while doing so. More than 4,500 such ads have been placed on this page, with regular dealers coming back each issue.

It costs only £5 to place a 50-word For Sale general announcement. Or £10 for a 100-word list ad, detailing issues and prices. Ads can appear within a week of you sending them...

So, what are you waiting for? Everybody else to jump in first?

... It's up to you!

Comic & Card Events

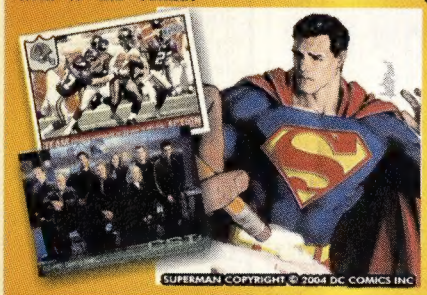
FREE ADMISSION TO ALL SHOWS
DOORS OPEN 12 NOON

THE NATIONAL COLLECTORS MARKETPLACE™

2004 SUNDAY NOVEMBER 7

ROYAL NATIONAL HOTEL
BEDFORD WAY
LONDON WC1

With over 180 tables, the National is the largest regular marketplace for comicbook and trading card collectors in the U.K. You will also find a whole range of related materials including TV, Film, Fantasy, Sci-fi and Toys from leading British & international dealers.
A refreshments counter and bar will be open next to the venue.



2000 AD
ACTION FIGURES
ANIME
BABYLON 5
BEANIE BABIES
BRITISH COMICS
BUFFY
COMIC BOOK SUPPLIES
GAMING CARDS
GOLDEN AGE COMICS
HEROCLIX
LATEST IMPORT COMICS
MANGA
NON-SPORTS CARDS
ORIGINAL ARTWORK
POKEMON
POSTERS
SILVER AGE COMICS
SPORTS CARDS
SCI FI/FANTASY
STAR TREK
STAR WARS
TOYS
TRADING CARD SUPPLIES
VIDEOS
YU-GI-OH

HOW TO GET THERE. BUS: 68, 91, 168 or 188 to Woburn Place. UNDERGROUND: Piccadilly Line to Russell Square. NATIONAL RAIL: Euston and Kings Cross are within walking distance of the venue.

FUTURE DATES: 5TH DECEMBER 2004, 20TH FEBRUARY 2005

BIGGER & BETTER VENUE

COMICBOOK MARKETPLACE & CARD MART

2005 SUNDAY JANUARY 16

ROYAL NATIONAL HOTEL
BEDFORD WAY
LONDON WC1

The Comicbook Marketplace is moving to a bigger and better location in 2005, the Royal National Hotel, home of our sister event, the National Collectors Marketplace. There will be at least 120+ tables with over 1,000,000 comicbooks, magazines and trading cards on sale, including S.F., Fantasy, Film and T.V. related items from Britain's top dealers.

120+ DEALERS TABLES!

BIG CHANGES ARE COMING IN 2005
Register on our website for updates

Dealers: for table availability phone 020 747 66 873

www.comicmart.co.uk

Events

A summary of all the events advertised this issue

October

30/10 Nottingham: Comic Mart & Card Show, Victoria Leisure Centre, Gedling Street, Nottingham ..... (p56)

November

5/11 Bristol: ProCon 1, Ramada Hotel, Bristol ..... (p40)

6-7/11 Bristol: Comic Expo, Ramada Hotel, Bristol ..... (p67)

7/11 London: The National Collectors' Marketplace, The Royal National Hotel, Bedford Way ..... (p66)

13-14/11 Glasgow: Memorabilia Show, The SECC ..... (p11)

13/11 Leeds: Comic Mart & Card Show with special guest Staz Johnson, Leeds Metropolitan University, Brunswick Hall, Merrion Way, Leeds (p56)

20/11 Birmingham: Comic Mart & Card Show, The Clarendon Suites, Hagley Road, Birmingham ..... (p56)

20/11 London: Dave Gibbons signing at FP London ..... (p22)

27-28/11 Birmingham: Memorabilia Show, The NEC ..... (p11)

27/11 Newcastle: Comic Mart & Card Show, University of Northumbria, Students' Union Ballroom, Sandyford Road ..... (p56)

28/11 Glasgow: Glasgow Comic & Toy Fair, Henry Wood Hall, Claremont Street, Glasgow ..... (p41)

December

4/12 Manchester: Comic Mart & Card Show, Sachas Hotel, Tib Street, Piccadilly, Manchester ..... (p56)

5/12 Liverpool: Comic Mart & Card Show, Gladstone Hotel, Lord Nelson Street, Liverpool ..... (p56)

5/12 London: The National Collectors' Marketplace, The Royal National Hotel, Bedford Way ..... (p66)

11/12 Leeds: Comic Mart & Card Show, Leeds Metropolitan University, Brunswick Hall, Merrion Way, Leeds ..... (p56)

18/12 Nottingham: Comic Mart & Card Show, Victoria Leisure Centre, Gedling Street, Nottingham ..... (p56)

January 2005

8/1 Sheffield: Comic Mart & Card Show, The Royal Society for the Blind, Main Hall, Mappin Street (off West Street) ..... (p56)

15/1 Newcastle: Comic Mart & Card Show, University of Northumbria, Students' Union Ballroom, Sandyford Road ..... (p56)

16/1 London: Comicbook Marketplace & Card Mart, The Royal National Hotel, Bedford Way ..... (p66)

22/1 Manchester: Comic Mart & Card Show, Sachas Hotel, Tib Street, Piccadilly, Manchester ..... (p56)

23/1 Liverpool: Comic Mart & Card Show, Gladstone Hotel, Lord Nelson Street, Liverpool ..... (p56)

February

5/2 Leeds: Comic Mart & Card Show, Leeds Metropolitan University, Brunswick Hall, Merrion Way, Leeds ..... (p56)

20/2 London: The National Collectors' Marketplace, The Royal National Hotel, Bedford Way ..... (p66)

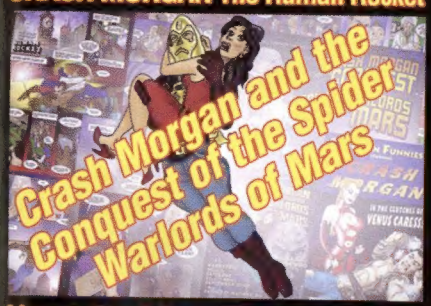
LOOKING FOR INFORMATION ON COMICS-RELATED EVENTS AROUND THE WORLD? SEE OUR INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL GUIDE ON PAGE 62.

Stop press: Ghost Rider co-creator MIKE PLOOG confirmed!
EAGLE AWARDS 2004
Over 13,000 votes cast!
HULK ART: HENRY FLINT Incredible Hulk & Ghost Rider © Marvel Characters, Inc
ADMISSION:
£5
FOR THE FULL EXPO WEEKEND*
*excludes Friday ProCon events

COMIC EXPO plus ProCon 1

Events update:

CRASH MORGAN The Human Rocket



Live on stage! An exciting recreation of a 'lost' classic 1940s radio serial recording!

AUTHORS SPEAK & SIGN!

Mike Conroy's VILLAINS, Paul Gravett's MANGA & Dez Skinn's naughty COMIX!

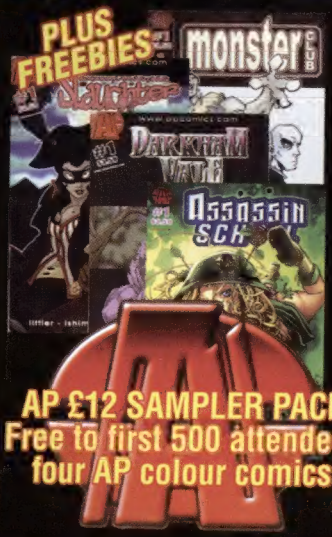
TALKING TRANSFORMERS:

EXPO EXCLUSIVE: signed & bookplated edition VERY LIMITED SUPPLY!

Live on stage: Furman, Wildman & Collins!

MIKE NOBLE
...making his first ever convention appearance!

PLUS FREEBIES



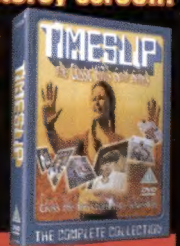
AP £12 SAMPLER PACK!
Free to first 500 attendees: four AP colour comics!

EXPO GOODIE BAG:
Free at the door -- comics, books, magazines and more!

Plus . . .

SPIDER-MAN 2: on a four-storey screen!

Plus SIMON BISLEY signing an exclusive variant! MIKE (Lucifer) CAREY on HELLBLAZER! The 2000 AD Team! HENRY FLINT! TREVOR HAIRSINE! PAUL GRIST! STEVE YEOWELL! THUNDERBIRDS! TV's TIMESLIP stars! And more!



NOVEMBER 5-7

ProCon 1
see details elsewhere this issue
FRIDAY 5/11:
2:00pm til very late

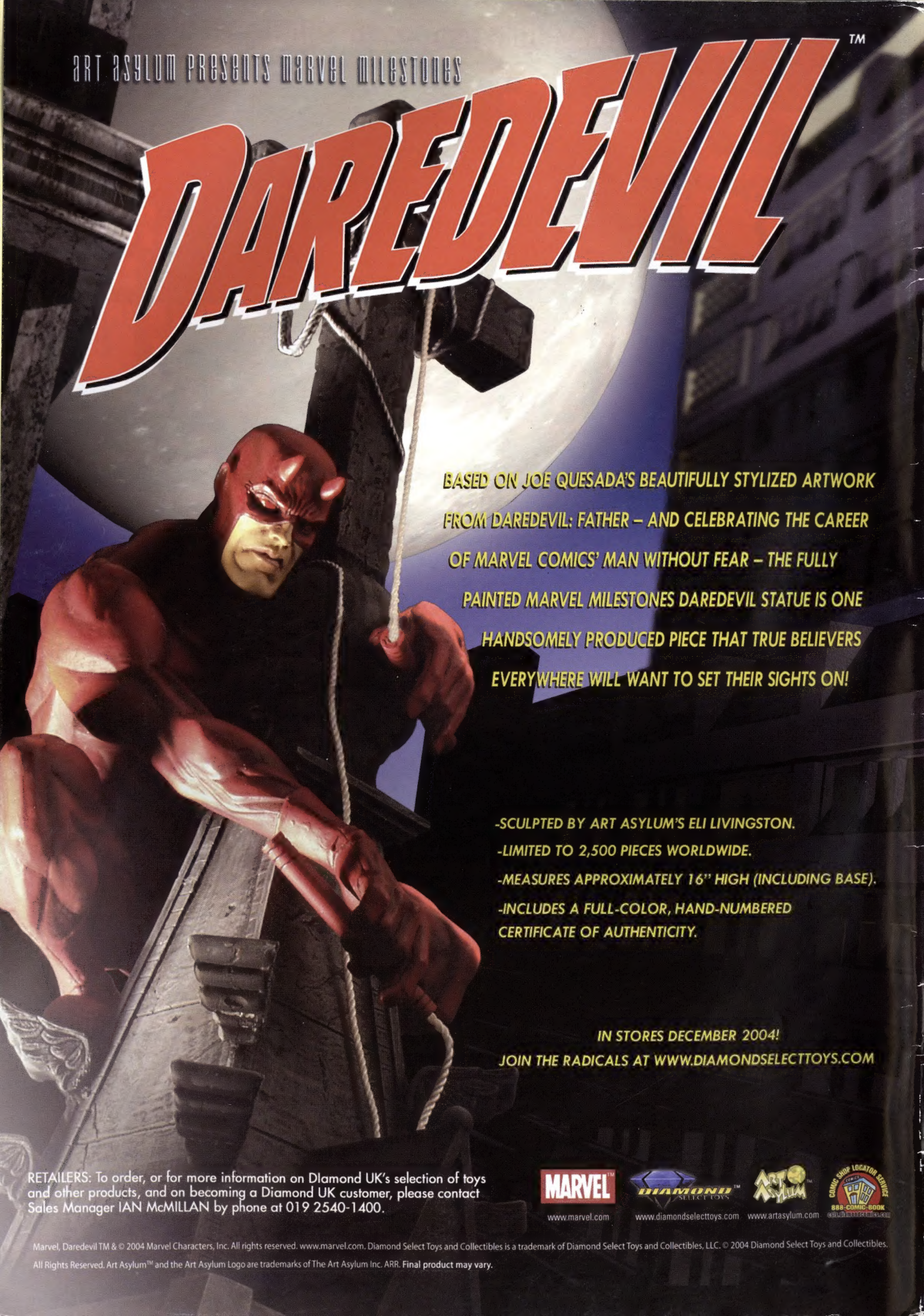
COMIC EXPO
SAT 6/11: 12 Noon - 6:00pm
SUN 7/11: 11:00am - 5:00pm

The Venue:
Ramada Plaza Hotel, Bristol (01179 260 041)
3 minutes from Temple Meads railway station
Comic Expo room rates: £55 (single) £65 (double)

Info: 0117 924 4655

For full creator/events listing, log on to http://comicexpo.mysite.wanadoo-members.co.uk/

2000 AD
pulp theatre ENTERTAINMENT
STUDIO 8
DW
AP
HOUSE OF RA
Q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DAREDEVIL™
BASED ON JOE QUESADA'S BEAUTIFULLY STYLIZED ARTWORK FROM DAREDEVIL: FATHER – AND CELEBRATING THE CAREER OF MARVEL COMICS' MAN WITHOUT FEAR – THE FULLY PAINTED MARVEL MILESTONES DAREDEVIL STATUE IS ONE HANDSOMELY PRODUCED PIECE THAT TRUE BELIEVERS EVERYWHERE WILL WANT TO SET THEIR SIGHTS ON!
-SCULPTED BY ART ASYLUM'S ELI LIVINGSTON.
-LIMITED TO 2,500 PIECES WORLDWIDE.
-MEASURES APPROXIMATELY 16" HIGH (INCLUDING BASE).
-INCLUDES A FULL-COLOR, HAND-NUMBERED CERTIFICATE OF AUTHENTICITY.
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